THE HISTORY OF JOHN GALT: PAST AND PRESENT IN THE WAKE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORY OF JOHN GALT: PAST AND PRESENT IN THE WAKE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

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The placing of the history of Enlightenment ideas and their implications in a wider social context has been an important characteristic of Enlightenment studies for some time. This thesis offers John Galt, the early nineteenth-century Scottish historical novelist, as an example of this wider reception of the Enlightenment. It investigates his novels and gives an account of Galt's attitudes to the ideas of his times, on the historical, socio-political and other matters. It returns the novels to their immediate Scottish intellectual and cultural contexts, speaking of Galt's Greenock, contemporary Scottish literary circles and London politics, all of which played important parts in Galt's formation. His works are interesting in showing a belief in the expediency of reason, learning and the possibility of human progress within an organic society and history, placing an emphasis on Divine Providential as the ground of a universal system. Galt supported progress, in so far as it brought advance of a merely practical nature; but he reached back to the moral values of the past as the true guides to living.

The thesis delineates Galt's ideas as composite, melding together traditional and new liberal/conservative notions. Thus a progressive understanding of history became, in the hands of Galt, a major element of his conservative stance in relation to radical reform and change. Using some contemporary theories such as historical inevitability and stadialism, he constructed a Scottish identity which highlighted the Calvinist traditions of the Lowlands. In brief, with Galt the dichotomy between Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment was disappearing.

Keywords:

John Galt, Enlightenment, Historiography, Scottish Enlightenment, Covenant, Historical Novel

ÖZET

JOHN GALT'IN TARİHİ: AYDINLANMANIN PEŞİNDEN GEÇMİŞ VE BUGÜN

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Aydınlanma fikirlerinin daha geniş bir çerçevede incelenmesi bir süredir gelişmekdedir. Bu tez, aydınlanma fikirleri ve bu fikirlerin daha geniş sosyal çerçevedeki etkilerininin araştırmasından yola çıkarak, erken ondokuzuncu yüzyıl İskoç romancılarından John Galt örneğinini irdelemekdedir. Galt'ın kendi zamanının sosyopolitik ve entellektüel zeminlerdeki fikirleri karşısındaki tutumu ve tarih anlayışı tartışılmaktadır. Romanlarında uslup ve dili gerçekçi bir şekilde yansıtmayı seçen Galt, tarihsel kaçınılmazlık ve etajizm (stadiyalizm) gibi çağdaş teorileri kullanmış; aklın yararına, öğrenmeye ve organik bir toplum ve tarih içinde insanın ilerlemesinin olabilirliğine inanmıştır. İlerlemeyi pratik sonuçlara götürdüğü ölçüde desteklerken, ilahi öngörülü akıl yürütmeye ve evrensel sisteme vurgu yapmıştır ve sonuçta doğru yaşam rehberi olarak geleneksel presbiteryen ahlaki değerleri vurgulamıştır.

Galt'ın eserleri geleneksel ya da yeni liberal muhafazakar fikirlerlerle, aydınlanma düşüncesini biraraya getirmesi açısından iletken özellik taşır. Aydınlanmanın ilerlemeci yaklaşımı Galt'ın ellerinde radikal reform ve değişime karşı temel dayanağı oluşturmuştur. Bu yaklaşım, yerel gelenekle Britanya geleneğini karşı karşıya

getirmeden kalvinist geleneği öne çıkaran bir Lowland İskoç kimliğiyle bağlanmıştır. Sonuçta, Galt'da aydınlanmacı-karşı aydınlanmacı ikiliği ortadan kalkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

John Galt, Aydınlanma, Tarih Yazımı, İskoç Edebiyati, Akit, Tarihsel Roman

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Certainly, those who are acquainted with a thesis project will know that it is more than simply the preparation of work for submission to receive a Ph.D. degree. Although it seems to be a job for one person, it requires many to bring it into being and it is sometimes easier to see the project as both a test of patience and a spiritual quest. For me the result was a personal achievement that reached beyond the topic itself. Indebted I am to many who helped me through it with their intellectual, psychological and material support. After my family, especially my mother and Merih, I have had the good fortune to have many beautiful friends: Özge and Ayşe, who many times, without complaint, listened to the errant speculations of my mind; Bahar and Akça, with whom I shared not only an office. Not to be forgotten are İskender, Semih Aksoy and Seher whose unfailing support in the most desperate hour of these years (when I lost my laptop). A special place in my acknowledgements goes to my dear friend Derya, who has been always, even in the worst times, there for me.

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I express my gratitude to Cadoc Leighton, my supervisor throughout the years at Bilkent University. It has been years of study, both Masters and Ph.D., through both difficult and nice times, but surely I have learned a few things. Special thanks to the other members of my thesis supervision committee, Anthony Lake and David Thornton, who have been greatly supportive with their readings and comments on various drafts. And to Paul Latimer and Oktay Özel I thank especially for their trust, friendship and support throughout the years.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

MS	Manuscript Collections
BL	British Library
EUL	Edinburgh University Library, Special Collection
NLS	National Library of Scotland
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

John Galt and the Scottish Enlightenment: Sciences of Man

There are more things, in the heavens and the earth
Than are dreamt of in philosophy[1]

1.1 John Galt

Robert Burns and Walter Scott were the most outstanding literary figures in the history of Scottish literature during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Scottish novelist John Galt, born in Ayrshire on 2 May 1779, has been regarded by literary critics as a minor figure in the line of Water Scott; but has become more and more an interest of research recently. The interest in him as a popularly read novelist in the early nineteenth century shifted and he and his work became an academic research topic during the last century. He attracted attention because of his interest in parochial life and the unreserved use of the Scottish language in his works. The aim of putting him into a context and establishing his merit among the great literati of his age resulted in studies which portrayed him as an Enlightenment man and an important practitioner in the historical novel genre in that period.

The west of Scotland, where Galt came from, was a highly commercialised part of Britain, being among the first regions in Britain to be industrialized. The culture

[1] Quoted by John Galt from an old magazine, *The Autobiography of John Galt*, vol. 1 (London: Cochrane and M'Crone, 1833), 29.

prospering in this region during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provided a popular alternative, or a compound culture, both to the narrow sectarianism that had long characterised Scottish orthodoxy and to the more polite but elitist Enlightenment of the Edinburgh literati. Far from serving solely as a conservative force, the emerging culture would help to infuse some of the more traditionalist ideas with some progressive ones which were associated with the developing commercial society of the Glasgow region. This emergent culture involved an increased respect for learning and a greater emphasis on reason.[2] Accompanying these changes was the growth of a British sense of identity in Scotland, though Britain should not be regarded as a stable homogeneous unit but a heterogeneous structure in dialogue.[3]

Almost all the novels of John Galt were set in the west of Scotland. They were of two types.[4] The first is constituted by those written for serial publication in *Blackwood's Magazine* and afterwards published as books. These were works such as *The Ayrshire Legatees,* serialised in the magazine from June 1820 to February 1821; *The Steamboat* serialised in the magazine from February to December 1821; and *The Gathering of the West* published in the magazine in December 1822. The second type consisted of those books which were directly published as one to three volume works. These were *The Annals of the Parish, The Provost, The Last of the Lairds, Sir Andrew Wylie, The Entail*

[2] See Ned C. Landsman, "Presbyterians and Provincial Society: The Evangelical Enlightenment in the West of Scotland, 1740-1775," in *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, eds. John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1993), 195-96. Also for the vivid cultural atmosphere in Glasgow, see *The Glasgow Enlightenment*, eds. Andrew Hook and Richard Sher (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1995).

[3] Leith Davis, *Acts of Union: Scotland and the Literary Imagination of the British Nation, 1707-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1-2.

[4] See C. A. Whatley, "Introduction," in *John Galt 1779-1979,* ed. Christopher A. Whatley (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1979), 39-40.

and *Ringan Gilhaize*. They had a more rounded and coherent structure. Most of them were published by renowned publishers like Blackwood, Cadell and Oliver and Boyd.

He called his novel series "The Tales of the West" and they were all set in that corner of Scotland bounded by the river Clyde and its estuary, roughly from Irvine in the south to Greenock and Glasgow to the north.[5] The time-span of most of the novels runs roughly from the early eighteenth century to the 1820s, when the novels were written. *Southenan* and *Ringan Gilhaize,* are set in an earlier period. *Ringan*'s story covers three generations, starting with the Reformation and ending with the killing of Claverhouse. In "The Tales of the West" novels included sections to connect them to the other books in the series.

The novels reflect the minds of certain groups in society. We have in them the depiction of a small town and its administration, as seen by its provost, or a small parish, which is depicted in memories of the parish minister. Then there are the landowners of the period. One is dispossessed, attempting to get back his family estates, in *The Entail.* Another is seeking a seat in parliament, in *Sir Andrew Wylie*. The stories are like the tiles of a mosaic. If the different novels are put together they create a historic picture of the whole society of that region and that period.[6] They can be considered, with few exceptions, to be comic realist novels.[7]

Galt was interested how things were and was quite successful in pointing out contradictions and ambiguities in human relations and manners. He was not interested in explaining trivial details such as the costume or habits of the period - a concern that many

[5] Ibid., 39.
[6] Keith Costain, "The Scottish Fiction of John Galt," in *The History of Scottish Literature,* ed. D. Gifford, vol. 3 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 114.
[7] For comic realism, see Louis Kronenberger, *The Polished Surface: Essays in the Literature of Worldliness*

historical novelists of that period applied in their depiction of the historical milieu.[8] He thought that his novels should be different and in making his works different, he employed historicism. It is misleading to say that "Galt was possessed of a historical consciousness only somewhat less remarkable than Scott's, who sought to develop a new form with its own characteristic structure to embody a vision of reality redefined to include its influential historical component." It is true that his method certainly employs a process of "cross-fertilisation between fiction and non-fiction," like Scott, but in doing so did not lose the historical aspect.[9] John Galt was certainly an industrious student of the historical-social theories of the Scottish Enlightenment. His fictions like *The Annals of the Parish* and *The Provost* reflect this explicitly with an expression of belief in an organic social system, the conviction that progress exists and the choice of rather small places and irrelevant men as heroes.[10] He also certainly believed in history's didactic role as a teacher of private virtue and correct public policy.

A substantial investigation of Galt's critics will be made in the second chapter of this study. However, to mention the main lines of it I would suggest that the existing research studies of Galt ought to be divided into three categories. These, in general, began to appear at the end of the nineteenth century as a kind of defence of Galt, the neglected author, to give him his deserved place in Scottish literary history. An interest in Galt was spurred on by the so-called "Galt Lectures" which were published as short

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(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 144.

[8] The followers of Scott in the genre of historical romance took over the features of putting in historical characters and details of costume and architecture to reconstruct the age. Regrettably such reconstruction came at the expense of the story and disturbed the organic relationship to the whole. On this topic, see J. C. Simmons, *The Novelist as Historian: Essays on the Victorian Historical Novel* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), 7-21.

[9] Keith M. Costain, "Theoretical History and the Novel: The Scottish Fiction of John Galt," *Journal of English History* 43 (1976): 342.

[10] Eric Frykman, *John Galt and Eighteenth Century Scottish Philosophy*, John Galt Lectures, 1953

pamphlets.[11] Of the three categories, the first that should be mentioned is the pure literary criticism of his works that combined criticism of his works, character analyses, and his biography.[12] This thesis, however, will focus on the works found in the next two categories. Works of the second category analyse the philosophical-theoretical attitude of John Galt and the expression of this in his works, in relation to eighteenth-century philosophical or social trends, including methods of history writing. In addition to examining Galt's historical method, the writers in this category concern themselves with his vision of society.[13] The third and the last group of researchers are those who asked how accurate Galt's histories were.[14]

(Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works, 1954).

[11] Timothy W. Hamilton, *John Galt: The Man, his Life and Work,* John Galt Lecture, 1946 (Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works, 1946), 1-2. The first lecture was given by Professor Rait, later Principal of Glasgow University in 28th October, 1927.

[12] Such as Martin Bowman, "*Bogle Corbet* and the Sentimental Romance," *John Galt: Reappraisals,* ed. Elizabeth Waterston, (Guelph: Univ. of Guelph, 1985), 63-71; Ian Gordon, "Galt's *The Ayrshire Legatees:* Genesis and Development," *Scottish Literary Journal* 16 (May 1989): 35-42; Ian Gordon, "Plastic Surgery on a Nineteenth-Century Novel: John Galt, William Blackwood, Dr. D.M. Moir and *The Last of the Lairds*," *The Library: A Quarterly Journal of Bibliography* 32 (1977): 246-55; Joseph Kestner, "Defamiliarization in the Romantic Regional Novel: Maria Edgeworth, Walter Scott, John Gibson Lockhart, Susan Ferrier, and John Galt," *Wordsworth Circle* 10 (1979): 326-30; Walling, William. "More than Sufficient Room: Sir David Wilkie and the Scottish Literary Tradition" in *Images of Romanticism: Verbal and Visual Affinities.* Eds. Kroeber, Karl and Walling, William (New Haven: Yale UP; 1978), 107-31.William Long, "John Galt's Mr. Snodgrass and Dr. Marigold," *Dickens Quarterly* 3 (Dec., 1986): 178-180; Patricia J. Wilson, "John Galt at Work: Comments on the Ms. of *Ringan Gilhaize*," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 20 (1985): 160-76; and J. Bridie, *The Scottish Character as It was Viewed by Scottish Authors from Galt to Barrie,* John Galt Lecture, 1937 (Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works, 1937), can be considered as a part of this group as well. It concentrates specifically on the problem of representation of Scottish character, putting Galt into the first group of authors who tried to give an interesting aspect to it which progressively became less distinctive and interesting from the middle of the nineteenth century to the 1930s. See, Ibid. 17; and bibliography for further literary criticism articles. See for more in the bibliography.

[13] See the articles Chitnis, "Scottish Enlightenment," in *John Galt 1779-1979*, 31-50; Frykman, *Galt and Eighteenth Century*; John MacQueen, "*Ringan Gilhaize* and Particular Providence," in *John Galt 1779-1979*; John MacQueen, "John Galt and the Analysis of Social History," *Scott Bicentenary Essays, Selected Papers read at Sir Walter Scott Bicentenary Conference,* edited by Alan Bell (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), 332-342; and Costain, "Theoretical History," 342-65.

[14] See C. A. Whatley, "*Annals of the Parish* and History" in *John Galt 1779-1979*, 51-63; W. M. Brownlie, *John Galt; Social Historian*, John Galt Lectures, 1951 (Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works 1951); Clare Simmons, "Periodical Intrusions in Galt's *The Last of the Lairds*," *Scottish Literary Journal* 24 (May 1997): 66-71.

In the secondary literature the intellectual-philosophical background to John Galt has been thoroughly investigated by researchers like Frykman, Chitnis and Costain. They have asked questions such as "By whom was he influenced?" and "To what extent did he apply the social theories and historical methods of the eighteenth century in his books?" These studies acknowledge that Galt's books are reflections of the social atmosphere in a period of rapid transition and that they embody the ideas of the Enlightenment philosophers concerning the effects of the process of social change. It is surely undeniable, as P. H. Scott says, that Galt succeeds in making Enlightenment ideas cease to be theoretical abstractions and gives them a local habitation and a reality in human lives.[15] In these ways, the works mentioned above are valuable and this thesis aims to contribute further to their researches on Galt and his vision of history.

Frykman starts with valuable questions about the reasons for Galt's writing of these fictions, his sources, his literary predecessors and contemporaries and his relationship to them.[16] Moreover, he asks the questions: "What are the special circumstances in Galt's period that were favourable to the creation of exactly the kind of story he excels in telling; and also what circumstances in his own life contributed to his success in that line?" Unfortunately, Frykman's answers are not very detailed. As for the reasons for Galt's writing, he gives no more than psychological explanations, like self-assertion.[17] On the question of what the circumstances of that period were which were favourable to writing on the topics, on the question of contemporary historical and political culture, research still needs to be done.

[15] Paul H. Scott, *John Galt* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), 6.
[16] See Frykman, *John Galt,* 19. He states that Galt relied largely on oral tradition, his own memory, local newspapers and local records he had access to in places like Dreghorn, Irvine and Greenock.
[17] He believes that Galt, leaving Greenock to improve his prospects, had to write and search for success,

Galt has been, very successfully, depicted against an eighteenth-century background. This raises two points. In the first place, surely he also needs to be understood with reference to his own time. As Benedetto Croce remarks: "All history is contemporary history." It is also to be noted that Galt acquired his eighteenth-century mind in a quite different way from that of his university-educated contemporaries. Further, his lifestyle was very different from that of those who aspired to be writers or who thought of themselves as intellectuals. His knowledge and understanding came not only from books, but also from travel and he thus acquired a comparative perspective on Scottish life, which is shown in his writings. Moreover, he was a full-time writer only for a short period and even then remained anxious to return to his commercial ventures.

Although, he was in no sense inferior intellectually to the Edinburgh literati or the other intellectual circles of his period, he was not a part of their world. He had personal contact with literary circles through his publishers, his London acquaintances and literary clubs. But Galt being only on the periphery of the intellectual life of his period, had, in consequence, real difficulty in getting himself and his writings accepted. His interest in the parochial, the vulgarity of his language and the simplicity (or rudeness) of his characters created some difficulty, at least with his publisher. He combined the local with his knowledge of Enlightenment theorising about society and of Enlightenment historiographical method; and thanks to Walter Scott's success in the genre of the historical novels he had an audience who were acquainted with and curious about his style.

There were times when Galt, like Scott, was a popular author. Nevertheless, he was certainly no mere imitator of the more celebrated writer. The most striking

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especially after his first return to Greenock from London in 1818. Frykman, *John Galt,* 10, 7.

differences between him and Scott are in the choice of characters and the perception of history, which reveals itself most clearly in Galt's *Ringan Gilhaize* and Scott's *Old Mortality*. Galt picked a radical Covenanter as his hero. Scott's hero is altogether more bland. Scott chose a character whom he thought would appeal to his readers. Galt tried to tell the truth about the Covenanters. Which of these characters really appealed to the Scottish readership of the period is an open question. Another explicit difference was their interpretation of Claverhouse. His view was stated in the novel.

> The implacable rage with which Claverhouse [acted] has been extenuated by some discreet historians, on the plea of his being an honourable officer deduced from his soldierly worth elsewhere; whereas the truth is, that his cruelties in the shire of Ayr, and other of our Western parts, were less the fruit of his instructions, wide and severe as they were, than of his own mortified vanity and malignant revenge.[18]

These differences reveal a lot about Galt and his perception of the past. He was always very much concerned to get into the mentality of the period and the character about whom he was writing. He reveals his thoughts on writing history in *The Provost*, where Provost Pawkie says

> that if we judge of past events by present motives, and do not try to enter into the spirit of the age when they took place, and to see them with the eyes with which they were really seen, we shall conceit many things to be of a bad and wicked character, that were not thought so harshly of by those who witnessed them, nor even by those who, perhaps, suffered from them ... The spirit of their own age was upon them, as that of ours is upon us.[19]

Galt has a strong empathy with his apparently difficult heroes — an empathy with a very alien past. Galt was very well aware that the past was a foreign country. He tried to make this foreign past acceptable to his readers. At least this is one interpretation of Galt — and it makes him a very good historian. On the other hand, it is also possible that Galt

[18] Galt, *Ringan Gilhaize, or The Covenanters* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1995), 342.

was better attuned to the contemporary Scottish mind than was Scott. If this is so, Galt's position outside elite literary circles gave him an advantage. To find out if this is so, the question of his "times" — the mentality of his non-elite contemporaries — needs to be explored.

This contrast with Scott suggests that, whilst there has been a lot written about Galt's theoretical view of history, there are more questions still to be asked about Galt and history writing. For example, what influence did his politics have on his historical views? Beyond the acknowledgement that he was a moderate Tory, there has been very little indeed said about his politics. Again, why did he perceive the Covenanters as he did? Indeed, why did both he and Scott choose to write about the Covenanters at this particular period? And what were the sources for Galt's interpretations of particular events in the Covenanting era? In brief, elucidation of the fact that Galt considered himself to be a theoretical historian by no means exhausts the topic of Galt and history.

Chitnis sees the Scottish Enlightenment man as one who came from "the elite in Scottish society, the gentry who patronised the *literati* and who were deeply interested in their concerns, the lawyers who were so crucial a force in politics, the economy and society, the churchmen, the academics and those professionally engaged in the business of philosophy, science and medicine."[20] Looking at this description, Galt is left out of the Enlightenment circle. However, more recently, Enlightenment studies have moved a long way from the salons of the *philosophes* and down the social scale. The questions are about the reception of Enlightenment ideas and values in much wider circles.[21] Just as a view of the Enlightenment has ceased to focus on Paris, so a view of the Scottish

[19] Galt, *The Provost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 74.
[20] Chitnis, *Scottish Enlightenment,* 31-32.

Enlightenment can no longer focus on Edinburgh. Galt was certainly, in part, a man of the late Scottish Enlightenment. Was he also reflecting the notions of past events of a social group not conventionally identified with the Scottish Enlightenment? It may be that Galt himself defines this social group in his novels — in that mosaic picture of small town and rural southwest Scotland. It was a group much less concerned with intellectual matters and much more with commerce and daily politics. But certainly, Galt among them would again emerge as an exception, one who, while sharing their concerns, also wrote articles and novels.

1.2 Scottish Enlightenment: The Science of Man

In his novels and other writings John Galt reflects certain ideas and theories of his period. Although Galt was not a member of the academic or intellectual stratum of society, he did belong to the wider "republic of letters" and clubs through which Enlightenment ideas found a social context. Galt was not only a consumer of this culture, constructed mainly by university professors, ministers of the Kirk and lawyers; but he also contributed to it through his membership in literary and philosophical clubs and his own writings in magazines.[22] However, it would be wrong to assume that Galt had a consistent and systematic scheme of ideas, consistently taken or adapted from the Scottish Enlightenment. His ideas appeared piecemeal and had an eclectic nature. Some of his thoughts were highly influenced by religious concerns and some by his arduous readings.

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[21] Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[22] University, Kirk and Law were the major institutions of Scottish Enlightenment; see A. Broadie (ed.), "Introduction," in *The Scottish Enlightenment, An Anthology* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1997), 10–13 and A. Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Historical Age of the Historical Nation* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), 1.

His studies began in his local Greenock subscription library,[23] and continued with his passion for reading in the British Museum and libraries he came across during his travels.

However, the major problem with popular writers such as Galt or, indeed, ordinary members of the reading public, is to trace any one-to-one relation between individual thinkers and their reader. It is only through Galt's *Literary Life* or *Autobiography* that such relations can be established, mainly by tracing similarities in thought. Galt did not receive a systematic education on many of the topics with which he was concerned, and when he does not indicate explicitly that he undertook a systematic reading in them, one can but try to trace links. One must also bear in mind that ideas do not necessarily emerge only from reading. As Alexander Broadie points out: "the Scottish Enlightenment was populated by people of flesh and blood who wrote in a historical context. They knew each other, interacted with each other, ate, drank, argued with each other."[24] Popular conceptions and the construction of a popular perception of a certain idea are always difficult to trace in terms of its mediums and origins, but it is clear that intellectual trends, especially during the Enlightenment, which aimed to develop and enlighten society, certainly had an impact on the perceptions of ordinary people as well as an intellectual elite. Here we shall trace, through similarities in ideas, how a Scottish-bred and Scottish-educated man such as Galt, who lived in London, perceived these ideas and formed his own system of thought.

Scotland was not isolated from other European countries in terms of interests and culture. French and German *philosophes* influenced it, as it influenced some of them, including Francois-Marie Voltaire (1684–1778), Charles-Lois Montesquieu (1689–1755),

[23] The valuable work of Erik Frykman has shown partly to what works the industrious reader Galt had access at Greenock Library. Frykman, *John Galt*, 8–9. See appendix 2.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) and Immanuel Kant (1706–1790).[25] Interconnections existed between countries and between different types of ideas. It is difficult to draw a line between Enlightenment and non-Enlightenment ideas or attitudes, since a clear-cut definition of the Enlightenment cannot, of course, be given.[26] In general, however, following Kant's influential definition in "What is Enlightenment?" it is argued that Enlightenment thought rested on the autonomy of reason. The Enlightenment, to borrow its own self-glorifying rhetoric, was, in the most general sense, a progressive endeavour meant to liberate man from his bondage to superstition, mainly through rational thought: in other words, it was a project to disenchant the world.[27] Reason and rationalism were widely discussed topics, though adherence to an entirely rational humanity proved more difficult to attain. The period was marked by a freedom to express thoughts and to think creatively without undue regard for boundaries and authorised texts. The Scottish phenomenon was related to this wider movement, with which it shared some family characteristics.[28]

The Scottish Enlightenment contributed to the greater European movement chiefly with its great interest in explaining the nature of man. This turned into a great project of "the Science of Man," which sought to connect all sciences.[29] The project had

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[24] Broadie, *Historical Age*, xi.
[25] For Kant as an heir to Common Sense philosophers such as Thomas Reid, James Beattie and James Oswald, see M. Kuehn, *Scottish Common Sense in Germany, 1768–1800: A Contribution to the History of Critical Philosophy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 167–207.
[26] Broadie, "Introduction," in *Scottish Enlightenment*, 16.
[27] See Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Concept of Enlightenment," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1973), 3–42.
[28] See Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), 4; and John Robertson, "The Scottish Contribution to the Enlightenment," in *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation*, ed. Paul Wood (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 41–42.
[29] For a thorough examination, see *The 'Science of Man' in the Scottish Enlightenment: Hume, Reid and their Contemporaries*, ed. Peter Jones (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1989); Alexander Broadie, "A Science of Human Nature," in *The Tradition of Scottish Philosophy: A New Perspective of the*

three fields of enquiry: moral philosophy, political economy and history. The term "Scottish Enlightenment" was first used by William Robert Scott in 1900, but during the late eighteenth century Dugald Stewart had already defined, in his collection of biographies of important Scottish philosophers, a Scottish school of philosophy.[30] The term describes an era in Scottish intellectual life whose golden years were between 1750s and 1800 and which had its echoes until the 1830s.

In the early nineteenth century David Hume and Adam Smith had already passed into the status of contributors to the Enlightenment canon, but there were a few figures of the golden age, including Adam Ferguson and Henry Mackenzie, who were still living.[31] Henry Cockburn, the writer and critic, wrote in the early nineteenth century:

> Though living in all the succeeding splendours, it has been a constant gratification to me to remember that I saw the last remains of a school so illustrious and so national, and that I was privileged to obtain a glimpse of the "skirts of glory" of the first, or at least of the second, great philosophical age of Scotland.[32]

Galt, born only in 1779, lived at the end or after the end of the Enlightenment period. In this section the aim is to show the intricate filiations of ideas and connections between Galt's various writings and Scottish Enlightenment ideas. Literary critics have already pointed out that Galt was influenced greatly by contemporary ideas about the formation of society, improvement and human nature.[33] Galt's understanding of these ideas is illustrated in almost all of his writings.

Hume had made the first attempts to explain the connected network of sciences which was later emphasised by Dugald Stewart. The Science of Man, as Stewart termed

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Enlightenment (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), 92-104.

[30] Paul Wood, "Introduction: Dugald Stewart and the Invention of 'The Scottish Enlightenment'," in *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation*, 1, 3.

[31] John Clive, *Scotch Reviewers: The Edinburgh Review, 1802–1815* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 18.

it, saw human nature as the principle of unity for all enquiries in all sciences, which all represent one part of nature.[34] Stewart pointed out that "[T]here is a mutual connection between the different arts and sciences … the improvements which are made in one branch of human knowledge, frequently throw light on others, to which it has apparently a very remote relation." Hume restricted this nature in general by saying that it was only the nature we perceive and that we cannot know whether it really exists in that form because the things we know derive from our own and common social experiences and observations.[35] Thus, every science relates to every other because they are necessarily connected to the fact of human nature, i.e. relate to the experiences and observations of man. The human perspective, or the possibilities of what can be processed in the human mind, is a determinant force:

> 'Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or lesser to human nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural religion, are in some measure dependent on the Science of Man; since they lie under the cognisance of men, and are judged of by their powers and faculties. 'Tis impossible to tell what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences were we thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of human understanding, and cou'd explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and of the operations we perform in our reasoning.[36]

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[32] Quoted in Wood, "Introduction," 2.
[33] For Galt critics who say that he was an Enlightenment man, see Chapter 1.
[34] On the Science of Man, see Dugald Stewart, "Introduction," *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (Brattleborough, Vermont: William Fessenden, 1808), 23–46.
[35] D. Hume, "Introduction," in *A Treatise on Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1941), xix–xx. For an analysis of reason and experience in Hume, see Ian Ross, "Philosophy and Fiction. The Challenge of David Hume," 65-71, and Philip P. Wiener, "Kant and Hume on Reason and Experience in Ethics," in *Hume and the Enlightenment*, ed. William B. Todd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1974), 43-51.
[36] Hume, "Introduction," *Human Nature*, xix.

1.2.1 Reason and Morality

According to Galt, reason was not to be despised, for, indeed, part of human understanding of the universe came from it. However, like Hume and many others, he refused to admit that reason was itself sufficient and the only source of knowledge. Hume considered that it was a way of fighting against what he denominated superstition and bigotry, but felt that there were other principles in human nature that reason could not overcome, such as religion.[37] However, at his point Galt's objections rose. According to Galt the obstacle was the inability of reason to comprehend the whole system created by the hand of Providence.[38] Reason for Galt was to be checked by morality, since it could easily be put to use in supporting human selfishness.[39]

Galt's first resistance to rationalism seemed to have been inspired by reading William Godwin's (1756–1836) *Enquiry concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness,* which was published in 1793 and which made him known as the philosophical representative of English Radicalism.[40] Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams* (1794) was, however, a greater shock to Galt since it suggested the falseness of the common code of morality. "Never pious catholic was more astonished at the effrontery of Luther's Commentary on the Galatians, than I was with the contents of that book." Godwin's extremism evoked in Galt a resistance to these rational theories, as he said in

[37] In *A Treatise of Human Nature* Hume explains that there is an irrepressible irrationalism in the human soul.
[38] Reason was surely good for material progress in society: see Galt, *Annals of the Parish* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1978), 162, 180; but reason itself was not enough: see Galt, *Literary Life and Miscellanies of John Galt* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1834), vol. 1, 287–88.
[39] Galt, "Seven Principles of Political Science," *Monthly Magazine* 48 (December, 1819): 400.
[40] DNB, vol. 8, 65.

his *Autobiography*.[41] He considered Godwin's notions in the novel to be diabolical. His main opposition to Godwin, besides his pure rationalist attitude, was his rejection of common moral codes, manifest, for instance, in his views on marriage. Against these convictions Galt asserted, as did many philosophers in the moral sense school, that "there was some instinctive principle of morality which was earlier exercised than reason." It was this moral instinct, Galt concluded, that first prompted his refusal to accept Godwin's ideas, and after that reflection came his rational questioning. He desperately maintained that although he could not refute Godwin's arguments he was sure that they were not right and that there was a moral sense, which was in essence nothing else but a tendency to Christian morality.

> Years after, I became more convinced of this, and ultimately of opinion, that what was wanted could only be found among the affections … and have lived to see that Mr. Godwin's notions on the subject are consigned, with other radical trash, to the midden hole of philosophy. No sensible man imagines now that the world may be better regulated by the deductions of human reason than by the instincts conferred by Heaven.[42]

During Galt's Mediterranean tour (1809-11) he wrote a poem called the *Education of Medea*, expressing the view that only through this moral nature was it possible to hold societies together. Virtue and vice, good and evil were grasped by a sensual instinct in human beings. Similarly, in his novel *The Majolo* the main character speculates that "there must be an instinct in our nature that enables us to discover the differences between good and evil actions, and it is that instinct which informs us of the presence of guilt."[43] Without these sensual-moral instincts, human beings, who are

[41] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 43, 41.
[42] Ibid., 43.
[43] Galt, *The Majolo: A Tale*, vol. 1 (London: T. Faulkner, 1816), 162. First published in 1815, *The Majolo* was not valued much as a literary work but it has always been perceived as a book that shed some light on Galt's interest and ideas. See Frykman, *Scottish Stories*, 30.

originally driven by furious passion, could not live together, form laws or follow a comprehensive plan. In nature, our mental and corporeal powers were in strife. "Why are we so averse to confess to one another, how much we in secret acknowledge to ourselves, that we believe the mind to be endowed with other faculties of perception than those of the corporeal senses." And he continues: "It may be that the soul never sleeps, and what we call dreams, are but the endeavours which it makes, during the trance of the senses, to reason by the ideas of things associated with the forms and qualities of these whereof it then thinks."[44]

Galt's perceptions surely reflect the Moral Sense School, which has been argued to be at the root of the Scottish School, and later on also the Common Sense School. Galt believed in a moral sense separate from the rational and corporeal senses, but as a faculty that needs to be improved. However, he was not very clear as to whether or not this is innate. This question was dealt with in the Moral Sense School, initiated, most notably, by Francis Hutcheson, which differentiated between two sorts of good, namely the natural and moral good that we can distinguish with our feelings and senses. The senses could be separated into two as well: the first one was the Lockean conception of the five senses that help us to perceive an outer world and the second category was the moral sense that helped human beings to differentiate between good and bad. Here, however, the moral sense referred definitely to an innate ability to make a distinction between good–bad and beautiful–ugly.[45]

Thomas Reid, the common-sense philosopher, had a similar view about certain recurring manners, beliefs and perceptions in human beings. Although very complicated,

[44] Galt, *The Omen* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1825), 21, 22.
[45] See Francis Hutcheson, "Introduction," in *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*

in essence it expressed a basic belief that there were certain common traits of beliefs that were inherent in human nature and could be seen as a common logic, that made human beings distinguish and hold on to certain common ways, that could be linked to social operations of the human mind. Expressing a belief close to Galt's, Reid claimed that there was a "social operation of mind" which "appear[ed] very early in life, before we are capable of reasoning."[46]

Similarly, Hume did not reject the reality of moral distinctions and he added a new dimension to Hutcheson's moral sense.[47] For Hume, morality had a universal nature that involved both faculties of human beings, sentiment and reason, at the same time. "[Almost all moral determinations and conclusions] depend on some internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal in the whole [human] species."[48] Reid, though, rejected in general Hume's arguments,[49] and later Galt adapted Hume for their assertion of the social quality of moral sense. Although human beings can argue about whether something is just or unjust, essentially it is their sense of approval or disapproval, which are sentiments or feelings, that make them act by moral considerations. Hume's famous paradox explains his stance in considering both sentiments and reason as a source: "[r]eason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them." According to him, "reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will" and "can never oppose passion in the direction of the

(Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1772), 2.

[46] Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man,* in *The Works of Thomas Reid,* ed. William Hamilton (Edinburgh: Maclachan, Stewart and Co., 1849), 244, 245.

[47] Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals," in *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, [1927]), 169–82.

[48] Hume, *Principles of Morals,* 173.

[49] For Hume and Reid see George E. Davie, "Hume, Reid and the Passion for Ideas," in *A Passion for Ideas: Essays on the Scottish Enlightenment*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1994), 1-19.

will." [50] Morality for Galt was the highest merit which human nature was capable of attaining and this was achievable through a good Christian education. In his *Annals* as well as in his writings about crime and sin he expresses the idea that most evil exists because of a lack of this good Christian morality.

For Galt it could also be said that "philosophy and common sense are the same things."[51] The view that common sense was an ingredient in human nature, which was received in the formation of the Science of Man project of Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, formed the very basis for establishing certain theories about the earliest forms of society, government, religious belief, and the origin of languages. One of the most important aspects of the mental activity of common sense is that it tends to perceive everything in a causal relation and natural order. Human beings perceive this order because of their experiences and observations that certain actions have specific causes and occur in specific, predictable ways. The causal relations we create in our minds raise expectations of links between two events or phenomena, and human beings soon tend to see a necessary relationship between events.[52] Experience is of major importance in helping us to perceive such relations. Without experience, understanding is not possible. Further, experience is related to history. History for Enlightenment thinkers implied not only political history or the history of events, but history as a means of explaining the nature of things in the material world, and the nature of human beings and social institutions.

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[50] Hume, *Human Nature*, 415, 413.

[51] Galt, *Majolo*: *a Tale* (London: H. Colburn, 1815), 21. Common Sense Philosophy of Reid intricate in origin was made popular in a simplistic form by writers such as James Beattie, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in Aberdeen, with his *Essay on Truth*. E. H. King, "James Beattie's 'The Castle of Scepticism' (1767): A Suppressed Satire on Eighteenth-Century Sceptical Philosophy," *Scottish Literary Journal* 2 (December, 1975): 19.

[52] D. Stewart, "Introduction," *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (Brattleborough, Vermont:

A common method that rested on such a premise is the conjectural history of Dugald Stewart. The never-changing fundamental nature of man and the world enable us to assume certain ways in which society might have developed without us having to know detailed historical facts and descriptions beyond contemporary experience. Dugald Stewart's explanation makes it clear:

> That the capacities of the human mind have been in all ages the same, and that the diversity of phenomena exhibited by our species is the result merely of the different circumstances in which men are placed, has been long received as an incontrovertible logical maxim; or rather, such is the influence of early instruction, that we are apt to regard it as one of the most obvious suggestions of common sense.[53]

Galt's recurring references to human nature while explaining his position for or against topics of reform in economy and law (see Chapter 3), can be seen to rest upon the various premises within the contemporary Science of Man. This also forms the basis of his interest in philosophical history, or as he put it, "theoretical history," a term that was employed by the Scottish realist philosophers "to designate a form of historical speculation and historical writing," that is, theorising upon history.[54] This form of historical enquiry became one of the major trends in the mid and later eighteenth century, not only in British but also in European historiography.[55]

William Fessenden, 1808), 68–69.

[53] D. Stewart, "Dissertation," in *Collected Works*, ed. W. Hamilton (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1854), vol. 1, 69.

[54] For example, John Millar, William Robertson, James Dunbar and Gilbert Stuart. This group was also referred to as the "Common Sense School." Their interest in history was characteristic of philosophers of the Enlightenment anywhere else in Europe, for example, interest in progress. These historians had accepted the basic positions of Thomas Reid, the leader of the school of Scottish Realism. For a general account of the work and influence of the Scottish theoretical historians, see Thomas P. Peardon, *The Transition in English Historical Writing, 1760–1830* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933); and G. Bryson's *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945).

[55] Costain, "Theoretical History:" 345.

For Galt, writing novels was similar to writing history. It seems that the term "novel" made Galt uncomfortable when it was applied to his works.[56] As he perceived it, a novel has to have a formal plot with a beginning, a middle and an end, thus having a structure previously set by the author.[57] However, in his understanding of his own works, they did not follow this pattern. He held that his works were concerned with a set of "natural phenomena" or, to be more specific, the rise and progress of a certain society, which had no conclusion. His writing was the building of a stage, on which, as he put it,

> the imagination and the memory work together, and their united endeavour to supply what has been forgotten, begets reflections with a character of truth about them, such as the offspring of fancy never possessed; and with more beauty, no less interesting than the hard features of veteran and serviceable facts.[58]

Galt therefore searched for a form that would best portray "the natural phenomena" of a changing society. This form had to entail a kind of factual fiction or 'faction' about a certain locality within a certain time span. In his explanations of his book, the *Annals of the Parish*, Galt spoke further about this chosen form, saying that his works should "be more properly characterised as theoretical histories, than either as novels or romances." He added:

> I do not think that I have had numerous precursors, in what I would call my theoretical histories of society, limited, though they were required by the subject, necessarily to the events of a circumscribed locality.[59]

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[56] He disliked the term within the eighteenth-century theories of the novel, but adhered to Walter Scott's definitions of the historical novel and nowadays they would fit perfectly within the descriptions of Bakhtinian hybrid novel. See chapter four and Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: Texas University press, 1981), 366.

[57] He makes this remark in describing his novel *Sir Andrew Wylie*: "... as it now stands it is more like an ordinary novel, than that which I first projected, inasmuch as, instead of giving, as intended, a view of the rise and progress of a Scotchman in London, it exhibits a beginning, a middle, and an end, according to the most approved fashion for works of that description." Galt, *Autobiography,* vol. 2, 239.

[58] Galt, *Letters from the Levant; Containing Views of the State of Society, Manners, Opinions, and Commerce in Greece and Several of the Principal Islands of the Archipelago* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1813), 181, 218.

[59] Galt, *Autobiography,* vol. 2*,* 219.

Unfortunately, Galt was not very eager to explain the term "theoretical history" which he had borrowed from the Scottish philosophers. And until the 1960s this phrase did not occupy much space in works about Galt. Keith Costain is the only one who has made a thorough investigation into this matter.[60] One thing seems certain: Galt knew precisely what he meant by this term.

The practice of theoretical history is a good illustration of the interconnected Science of Man. Its writers were fascinated by the study of progress, which was manifested in the several stages of history, associating each development of a society with a specific mode of subsistence. Their enquiry arose not merely from an interest in how society had evolved to its present stage, but also from a wish to expose the patterns of that development, so as to prevent any interruption that might occur through any misconduct of individuals or governments. Progress was a natural part of the universal systems that could not be known empirically. It was inherent in human nature and not a result of human planning. It was not a form of rational conduct, but had a natural evolution and emergence. Human nature thus became the theoretical historians' major reference for explaining history, sociology, economy and to a certain extent even the natural sciences. This understanding, integral to the Science of Man, had an important impact upon all sorts of improvement: for new technologies; for breaking old and superstitious ideas about our physical circumstances; and for agricultural and economic

[60] Costain explains that in the works before him this has not been investigated in detail. "James Kinsley, in the 'Introduction' to the Oxford edition of *Annals of the Parish* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) and Ian Gordon in the 'Introduction' to his Oxford edition to the *Entail* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) as well as in his more recent work, *John Galt: The Life of a Writer* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1972), both take seriously Galt's attempt to define the type of fiction on which his achievement rests. But they tend to use Galt's terminology after the imprecise manner with which Galt himself used it." K. Costain, "Theoretical History," note 6. Whatley, "Introduction," in *John Galt*, 15, also mentions that Galt's aim was writing theoretical history but Whatley does not further investigate it.

development.[61]

1.2.2 Acumulative Forces in History

"The world is gradually growing better, slowly I allow, but still it is growing better, and the main profit of the improvement will be reaped by those who are ordained to come after us." This was the conviction of Galt's Mr Pawkie, the provost.[62] A strong bond to the past and progress are linked to the acumulative force of experience and knowledge, which at the same time comprise the common ground of all sciences. For Galt the capacities of the mind do not change although the content and amount of knowledge can. Thus a distinguishing character of the human mind is "an invincible spirit of inquiry." Though the mind can satisfy itself "with the simple impressions communicated by the external senses, it was in all probability one of the first desires of the first men who tenanted the earth, to gain, not only a more intimate but comprehensive acquaintance with its peculiar qualities and figure." Knowledge about the Earth and all other sciences and arts gradually increased by sharing and pondering upon these subjects.

> Knowledge, we know, is but a slow growth, laboriously and scantily quarried from obscurity by human wit for human uses; neither had men yet congregated in those vast masses which by the continual collision of individuals, at length elicit light and truth of every description.[63]

[61] Broadie, *Historical Age*, 38.
[62] Galt, *Provost*, 152.
[63] Captain Samuel Prior (nom de plum for Galt), ed., *All the Voyages Round the World From the First By Magellan in 1520, To That of Krusenstern in 1807* (London: W. Lewis, 1820), iv. The book is the collection of voyages and Galt added a preface to it. Incidentally, Dugald Stewart uses the same example of development in astronomy and navigation in order to propose his argument about the holistic nature of the human mind. It raises the question whether Galt's interest in writing this book was inspired by reading Stewart.

Knowledge is an inheritance that is transferred from one society to another, from one generation to the next. However, there is no consistent gradual increase in knowledge and experience, for knowledge can be reduced or lost if it is not pursued and protected.

> The knowledge of the figure of the earth, by which it was first supposed capable of being sailed round, has been gained solely from the progressive improvements of astronomy. This science is supposed to have made some progress among the antediluvians, whose lives, according to Josephus, the Jewish historian, were purposely prolonged by Providence for its advancement. Noah communicated all that was known on the subject to the Chaldeans, by means of his immediate descendants. The Egyptians succeeded to all the scientific acquirements of these people; and, according to some writers, first conjectured the earth to be spherical some time previous to the era of Solomon, the Jewish ruler, by observing the moon to fall into her shadow. This shrewdness of remark indicated considerable advancement in the science. It is remarkable, however, that by one of those strange revolutions in empires, which history fails to record, and for which even tradition offers no explanation, this people sunk from the summit of power and civilization, to imbecility and barbarism; so that in the time of Augustus of Rome, astronomy, along with every science, had become nearly extinct in that country.[64]

The interconnectedness and acumulative view of science resulted in the emphasis upon a generalist view of education in Scotland. Dugald Stewart argued that specialist education was "partial and injudicious" and failed to respect the holistic nature of the mind. There was a unity of science and knowledge, so that an acquisition in one area could make a helpful difference to one's thinking in others.[65]

Thus knowledge was crucial for change and improvement. Lack of it led to stagnation and superstition in a society. Even fiction, although read mostly for amusement, had to be, according to Galt, "a vehicle of instruction, or philosophic teaching by examples."[66] Lack of knowledge was a severe ill to any society. Both prejudice and superstition were caused of lack of knowledge. This could be seen in the

[64] Ibid., vii–viii.
[65] Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 42.

ancient societies which did not obtain enough knowledge about natural phenomena and about other nations:

> The knowledge of human nature was then so limited as to give rise to the most extravagant conjectures concerning the inhabitants of this as well as of the other world. The majority of people believed in witches and conjurors, in cunning dwarfs and monstrous giants, which the adventurers no doubt, expected to see, as well as many other wonders in the new countries.[67]

That every science was connected to the Science of Man, as Hume's thought, was accepted by Galt. All species of knowledge, whether mathematics, ethics, or social sciences, contributed to form a whole. Civilisations were formed through these accumulations of knowledge, in which the main unit was the human being. Instruction was thus important for increased knowledge and for social integrity. However, besides an emphasis on the significance of the learning that was associated with reason, Galt also spoke of another source of knowledge: the wider knowledge about the universe and its laws known directly only to God and revealed through the Word.[68] It is certainly wrong to assume that the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers were purely rationalists. On the contrary, they did not disengage from the idea of Providence and were clearly influenced by their Presbyterian background. Thus these few examples above show not Galt's consistent adherence to, but only some of his intellectual connections to the Science of Man and in general the Scottish Enlightenment.

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[66] Whatley, "*Annals of the Parish* and History," 52.
[67] Galt, *Voyages*, xv.
[68] Galt, *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 288.

1.3 Galt and Context

This study will deal with the reception of the (Scottish) Enlightenment by groups not usually identified with it, of which Galt is a prime example. It will focus on how Galt's mind was formed both by contemporary issues and by Enlightenment ideas, and on how these concerns were reflected in his works. Various studies have perceived Galt as an Enlightenment figure, but many have also viewed him as a parochial novelist with a limited national significance.

Over time there has never been just one single perception of what constituted Scottishness.[69] A pattern of dichotomies has existed for centuries: Catholic–Protestant, Presbyterian–Episcopalian, Highland–Lowland, Jacobite–Hanoverian, Progressive (Unionist)–Traditionalist or Gaelic–English. The Enlightenment brought new divisions.[70] While distancing themselves from the fanatical political-religious movements of both the Covenanters and the Jacobites, Enlightenment thinkers postulated a narrative of rational progress, which for them was connected closely to the Union with England.

The watershed of 1707 thus came to be seen as a turning point in Scottish history, when a formerly barbaric, reactionary, superstitious culture was converted into a modern, enlightened and civilised one. Apart from this British viewpoint, towards the end of the eighteenth century there emerged a period of romanticisation of both the pre-Union and Jacobite eras, which had been condemned by Enlightenment thinkers. The Scottish

[69] Scottish national identity existed very much of conflicted articulations changing in time and place; see Leith Davis, *Acts of Union: Scotland and the Literary Negotiation of the British Nation, 1707–1830* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); and Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

[70] Maurice Lindsay similarly says that after the Union with England "the heroic past which had shaped the very lineaments of the Scottish character, aroused in Scott, and in his Scottish readers, a passionate nostalgia" and continues to cite similar great Scottish confrontations as Walter Scott's inheritance. Maurice Lindsay, *History of Scottish Literature* (London: Robert Hale, 1977), 309.

Enlightenment was, already in its self-advertisement, a golden age for intellectual and cultural life in Scotland. It was perceived as something that grew from the very heart of Scotland with its Scots Presbyterian intellectual traditions. The intellectual reputation of Scotland rose with the contributions of David Hume, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson. This golden age was not restricted to intellectual life. Social life also had its share in the new developments, particularly after the revival of trade in the wake of the Union of 1707 opened up new markets for Scotland, including the colonies as well as England itself, and when agricultural improvements with new technology, led by landlords such as Lord Kames, made their appearance.[71] The Union, however, juxtaposed, in the eyes of many, an underdeveloped *old* Scotland with a progressive, anglicised *new* Scotland.[72] It meant an aspiration towards a developed civilisation, as it prospered in London, and a dislike for the parochial backwardness of Scotland.[73] Educated Scots looked to the opportunities of metropolitan London, fashioning a society of fine gentility in Edinburgh that created a division between them and a long-established Scottish cultural tradition and literature.[74] As R. Crawford rightly remarks, however, the atmosphere was not on the whole an anti-Scottish attitude, so much as a pro-British one.[75]

[71] There are many arguments about the impact of the Union on Scotland. In my opinion the Union strengthened the economic status of individuals whereas Scotland as a political unit did not profit from this as England profited from its Colonies.
[72] On the efforts to modernise Scotland in intellectual and social terms, see Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985); and John Dwyer and Richard Sher, eds., *Sociability and Society*.
[73] Paul H. Scott, ed., *Scotland: A Concise Cultural History* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1993), 10-19.
[74] An insightful work on the paradox within Scottish culture during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is David Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: The Eighteenth Century Experience* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 8; and David Daiches, "Scotticisms and the Problem of Cultural Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain," in eds. Dwyer and Sher, *Sociability and Society*, 81–95.
[75] Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 18.

This same phenomenon is also referred to as an increased awareness of provincialism.[76] Attempts were made to break out of the Scottish parochial predicament. As Cairns Craig put it, "to escape the parochial we borrow the eyes of the dominant culture and through those eyes we are allowed to see 'the world'."[77] On the other hand, this awareness led to another cultural defence mechanism. Clive rightly observes that the idea of regional limitations resulted in "compensatory local patriotism" which emphasised "the real or imagined purity of native culture." This patriotism was, he suggests, set against the cosmopolitanism and increased economic and intellectual activity following the Union.[78] The period produced an emphasis on the 'Doric' inheritance and the intellectualism of an 'Athenian Enlightenment' on the one hand, and on Scotland's own past on the other. Edinburgh's great reputation as a centre of culture and learning, the habit of the Edinburgh literati of comparing themselves with the inhabitants of Athens in its classical age, and the great interest in classical architecture shown in the construction of the New Town; these all allowed the city its label: 'the Athens of North'.[79] Galt, as an author who lived during this period, inherited all these conflicts. Inevitably, therefore, Galt himself, and the criticisms of his work, had a complex relationship with Britishness, Scottishness and Enlightenment cosmopolitanism.

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[76] See chapter one in John Clive, *Scotch Reviewers*; for a fuller discussion on the problem of Scottish provincialism, see John Clive and Bernard Bailyn, "England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 11 (April 1954): 200–213.

[77] Cairns Craig, *Out of History, Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), 12.

[78] John Clive, *Scotch Reviewers*, 18–19. Also for the emergence of local patriotisms as a defence mechanism, see Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994). However, paralel to these developments there was also a rise of British patriotism in post-French Revolution Britain see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 1994), 284-87, 291-300, 318-19.

[79] Ian Duncan, "Edinburgh, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in *Romantic Metropolis: Cultural Productions of the City 1770–1850,* ed. James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

Reading criticisms of Galt against such a background is the aim of the second chapter. It examines how Galt was perceived by his contemporaries and by later critics within their own literary eras. This necessarily begins with reviews that were published during Galt's time in magazines such as *Blackwood's*, *Fraser's*, the *Critical Review*, the *Quarterly*, the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Monthly Review,* the *Monthly Magazine,* the *Scots Magazine* and the *New Monthly Magazine*.

The third chapter is a biographical study, in which I have tried to place Galt in his milieu and to analyse his character against the political, cultural and social background in which he grew up. In this way I hope to indicate the framework of ideas, attitudes, prejudices, commitments, conflicts and interests in which Galt's works were created. This chapter reveals Galt as one outside Chitnis' Enlightenment circle, but, nonetheless, exposed to the Enlightenment and other varieties of contemporary thought.

Going beyond these background studies, it is necessary to establish the thematic divisions of Galt's interest in the issues of his time as they stand out in his writings. The forth chapter is such a study, investigating Galt's ideas on some specific Enlightenment topics such as human nature, society, political economy and law reform. This gives a further insight into how Enlightenment ideas were received in a more conservative cultural background. Galt not only received Enlightenment ideas, but engaged in a dialogue with them. This was a dialogue between the ideas of the *philosophes*, the literati and Galt's own experiences. What is seen is how some Enlightenment ideas were filtered through an ordinary and practical Scots mind.

Of particular interest in tracing the sources of Galt's thought, are contemporary ideas about history and fiction. The early nineteenth century was a period when history

writing was shifting from an art of presentation to a scientific enquiry.[80] In the fifth chapter I have tried to outline the evolving genre of the historical novel and the historiographical tradition and compare those with Galt's position. History and fiction were not perceived as excommunicating opposites during the early nineteenth century, but were seen as existing side by side and fictional narrative was just one among many possible forms of history.

The sixth chapter examines Galt's history of the sixteenth and seventeenth century as revealed in his novel *Ringan Gilhaize*. What were contemporary writers saying about the Covenanters? Why was Galt, an Enlightenment man, so sympathetic to figures from this "dark" period? It will be important to establish the line of dispute and to note where Galt takes his stance. Although the historical accuracy of his story is sometimes mentioned, the focus is upon the perception of a historical period that many had preferred to neglect for many years. It also exposes a contrast between methodological modernity and a traditional view of the Covenant tradition.

One of the major themes of Enlightenment intellectual discourse, which Galt inherited, was that every society was subject to change.[81] Galt's contemporary historiography, very much influenced by Enlightenment theories, was tightly bound up with the idea of society, its evolution and how it should progress. The evaluation of Scottish history starting in the sixteenth century with *Ringan* continues in Galt's various other novels set in the eighteenth century. The topics in this historical enquiry are divided into religion, industrial development, language and social change. This seventh and last

[80] Lionel Gossman, "History and Literature: Reproductions or Signification," in *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, ed. Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 4–7.
[81] Lindsay, *Scottish Literature*, 320.

chapter is such an investigation of Galt's history in terms of change and progress. Galt's thought about the social structure, politics and reform, dealt with in the forth chapter, form a background to the social history in his works, including his fictions, as a whole. This thought takes a stadialist form. Galt, it should be added, although sharing many of the progressive attitudes of the Enlightenment, also pondered upon the consequences of material and spiritual progress. He investigated such developments with relation to human nature and reflected upon the influence of the Enlightenment ideal on human conscience. Galt's point of view was opposed to the essentialist, static perception of Scottishness, as defined by notions of the independent-minded and egalitarian outlook of the Scottish spirit, and epitomised by the wars of independence and the myths of *Bruce* and *Wallace*. His view was qualified, however, by didactic suggestions not to forget some essential Scottish values, such as Presbyterian ethics and beliefs.

Although extensive research has been done on Galt and Enlightenment historiographical ideas, there is certainly much more to say about him and his histories. The present study does not attempt to systematically and generally alter recent judgements made about Galt. Moreover, while it includes some of those judgements as illustrative of themes discussed, it is not in any sense a summation of all that has been said on Galt and his works. It is rather, an attempt to synthesise his novels, articles, methods and biographical data, and particularly to probe into their *raison d'être*.

My research has entailed finding out the issues in which John Galt developed an interest and why he developed an interest in them; describing the contemporary attitudes towards these issues; and looking for the treatment of them in his works. What is discovered is the extent to which his own times, social contexts and preoccupations

influenced his writing of history. This contextualisation of Galt, not only in terms of contemporary intellectual currents, but also in terms of the period's culture in general, will, I hope, contribute to an understanding of the broad topic of the reception of the Enlightenment, as it became an element in the mentality of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE ON GALT: GALT AND HIS CRITICS

To welcome the Pilgrim of this gross clime,
They had come from Eternity back to Time
Hogg, *The Carle of Invertime*

It is interesting to note that critics from different time periods have made different selections from Galt's works in accordance with the spirit of their times. As Roderick Watson puts it: "how we see literature, or a continuing tradition, or even our own identity, depends upon an act of perception and hence of selection on our part."[82] The perceptions of a work can change from generation to generation or even during the lifetime of an author. Galt was not only perceived in diverse ways during his lifetime but also perceptions after his death have gone through different stages, with him being favourably remembered in some and neglected in others. In the eyes of today's reading public, he remains an obscure figure, though known in academic circles. There has also been a changing attitude to what his impact was; to what extent he accurately reflected the times that he was dealing with; and whether he offered sagacious insights. In this chapter the aim is to outline these changes in perception. I shall argue that Galt cannot be easily claimed by any one literary tradition; yet he was most read and received attention at those times when Scottish identity or consciousness questions, in literature and Scottish literary forms, were put under a magnifying glass.

[82] Roderick Watson, "Introduction: Renewals and Revivals," in *Macmillan History of Literature: The Literature of Scotland* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 2.

In speaking of the variation in Galt's variable literary reputation, it should be said that this reflected the different periods of Scottish literary history, since, like Galt's work, they were related to and were concerned with national identity. It might well be said that Galt is one of the authors most strongly attached to Scottishness. This Scottishness could provoke both an affirmative reaction, as much as it could affix a negative criticism of Galt and his achievements. By studying the various periods when Galt was remembered or reviewed, one can easily trace a heightened awareness of Scottish matters reflected in the literary concerns in these periods. This is not to imply that Scots only remembered Scotland as a nation during these years: national sentiment has a continuous history — and it is interesting to follow these histories up. New issues of nationalism emerge, whereas old ones continue to exist but lose importance in argument. As David McCrone argues, we should think of these new issues "as a piece of music in which themes emerge, while previous ones become secondary, and interwoven with the existing ones, subtly changing their meaning."[83]

Galt has primarily been read as a Scottish author. This is not only because of his choice of the Scots language, but also because of his choice of subject matter, which was mainly Ayrshire and Renfrewshire society. However, he did not concern himself with a general definition of the Scottish character but, instead, gave one particular localised perspective among many. During the early nineteenth century there had been many attempts to define a general Scottish culture and the nature of Scottish nationhood. This attempt to speak of Scottishness can be observed in most Scottish writers and intellectuals. Galt's aim, however, was not to give a grand definition of Scottishness.

[83] David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation* (London: Routledge, 1996), 7.

Instead, he portrayed Scottish national identity in a more fragmented way, as just suggested.

It has been argued that the nineteenth-century perception of Scotland was dominated by Walter Scott's (1771-1832) pictures. Scott, in a sense, created Scotland as a romantic nation with a grand heroic past, which subsequently led to its conception as a nation of tartan. Duncan Glen suggests that "the nineteenth century was towered over by the personality and achievements of Scott," which indubitably created some problems for the other authors of that period, such as Galt, who were overshadowed by his literary authority.[84] The effort of bringing values or new proprieties, stories and ballads into the daylight were not confined within the boundaries of straight antiquarian activity, but were highly filtered through the contemporary mind and taste.[85] Publications in this Scottian (Walter Scott) fashion were appreciated and extensively read, eventually shaping the common perception of Scotland during the Victorian period.

Scott and his vision of Scottishness did provide a general framework for all the subsequent reception of all other Scottish nineteenth-century novelists. Galt is often grouped together with another so-called minor writer, James Hogg (poet/author of the Blackwood circle), both on account of the similarity of their topics and their attempts to engage themselves in a debate with Scott's works. Both tried to counter Scott's dominant image of Scotland, by insisting on an alternative tradition to that dominant in Scott. Notably, this concerns their emphasis on the Presbyterian Scottish tradition and their insistence on everyday, un-heroic histories of Scotland. Like the Presbyterian historian

[84] Duncan Glen, *Scottish History: A New History From 1299-1999* (Kirkcaldy: Akros Publications, 1999), 93.
[85] Penny Fielding, *Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture and Nineteenth Century Scottish Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 8-12.

M'Crie, Galt and Hogg belonged to the group who accused Scott of being biased against the Covenanters in *Old Mortality*.[86] Both were quite courageous in their attempt to put the Covenanters into the right or at least in an adequate context after Scott's allegedly misjudged attitude towards the matter: Galt in *Ringan Gilhaize* and Hogg in *Confessions of A Justified Sinner* and the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*.[87] Hogg's statement: "It's a devilish deal truer than [*Old Mortality*], and on that ground I make my appeal to my country," explains what his critics thought about Scott's view. As Douglas Mack puts it, Hogg "seeks to give voice to the insight, culture and concerns of non-elite, subaltern Scotland."[88] Galt, likewise, tried to evaluate the Covenanters in their own non-elite social and religious contexts, as opposed to what he perceived as Scott's patronising attitude.[89]

The whole story of Galt criticism can be divided into four stages. The first one encompasses the time he was still alive; the second one commenced in the 1890s when Blackwell published a collected edition of several of his novels. Approaching the centenary of his death in the 1930s some critics became interested in Galt yet again. This was associated with the publication of another collection, including *Ringan Gilhaize,* which had been virtually forgotten after its first publication. The fourth period started after the 1960s when, in the context of heightened interest in Scottish studies, the amount of academic research on Galt was greater than ever before. During this revival more

[86] Scott wrote a defence in *Quarterly Review* against such accusations by M'Crie. Scott's bias was not against the Covenanters, he says, he believed in their sincerity. Rather, *Old Mortality* was a statement on the side of moderation against violence and religious extremism. See Maurice Lindsay, *History of Scottish Literature* (London: Hale, 1992), 314-15.
[87] James Hogg's work, *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner,* tells the tale of a person who is brought up in a strict Presbyterian tradition and becomes obsessed with the idea that he is one of the Elect. Thus whatever he does is justified. It is a deep psychological perception of religious fanaticism. The *Brownie of Bodsbeck* concerns Claverhouse and his (among Scottish Presbyterians) commonly accepted atrocities.
[88] James Hogg, *Domestic Manners of Sir Walter Scott* (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1909), 77.
[89] Douglas S. Mack, "James Hogg in 2000 and Beyond," in *Romanticism On the Net*, 19 (August 2000), <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat385/19mack.html>, May 2001.

historical and specific topics, like his connection to the Enlightenment, caught the interest of scholars. He was now not only researched in Scotland and Canada, but also attracted attention from American, Swedish and French literary critics and literary historians.

2.1 Galt's Reception During His Lifetime

Turning first to Galt criticism during his lifetime, we find, of course, two attitudes: those in favour and those against his works.[90] The first two criticisms in favour of Galt's earliest works appeared in 1813.[91] Those who responded positively above all praised his realistic description of Scottish daily life. As Paul Scott observes, some of his earliest critics were quick to recognise many of his distinctive strengths, such as the accuracy of his observation; his social and political awareness; and his linguistic dexterity in Scots. [92] In short, the positive critics praised Galt for his realism as well as for his philosophical insight. The verisimilitude of his narrative, particularly in those works where he wrote in the form of autobiographies, like *the Provost, the Annals*, was appreciated; he was declared to be the best contemporary fictitious autobiographer.[93] According to these critics, the irony he generated by his creation and analysis of character made his writings very precious, in his handling of both the comic and the pathetic. Henry Mackenzie wrote

[90] As those who are involved in history of literature are aware, one has to be cautious about some of these reviews in favour of an author as well as those which vigorously criticise. Equally, rival magazines wrote bad reviews about their opponents. Walter Graham, for instance, says that literary criticism was also very much affected by the political factionalism of time, for instance he mentions that Scott, Ellis, Coleridge and Croker were very much biased in their reviews in the *Quarterly*. See Walter Graham, *Tory Criticism in the Quarterly Review 1809-1853* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1921).

[91] Review of *The Life and Administration of Cardinal Wolsey* by John Galt, *The Monthly Review* (May 1813): 47-63; Review of *Voyages and Travels* by John Galt, *The Monthly Review* (August 1813): 337-51.

[92] Paul H. Scott, "The Development of Social and Economic Theories in Selected Fiction of John Galt" (Masters' Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1987), 103. I have made considerable use of his list of Galt reviews and of his analysis of them.

a review of Galt's *Annals of the Parish* at the request of William Blackwood. It highly commended Galt for his success in writing in such a natural and accurate way. It was not a work of wit, according to Mackenzie, but it placed the figures so that the contemporary reader was able to recognise his own daily life. In his words the *Annals*

> places before us the figures as they are seen in every village with which we are acquainted…we see them at their doors or their firesides. They look, and speak, and act, as is natural to their situation; the pathetic is that of ordinary, not high-wrought feeling, and its language the natural expression of affliction without the swell of tragedy, or the whine of sentiment.

The characters "have their every-day clothes, only cleaner and more tidily put on."[94] Moreover, John Wilson made a general evaluation of Galt's published novels in a *Letter from an Occasional Contributor* to *Maga* in June 1822.[95] About the *Annals of the Parish* he wrote that "[t]here is nothing at all resembling it that I know of in our literature." He emphasised that it not only gave a correct reflection of daily life but moreover managed to communicate a political and philosophical depth: "there is far more truth and nature, and moral philosophy, and metaphysics, and politics, and political economy in this little volume, than in all Dugald Stewart and the *Scotsman*."[96] In the *Literary Gazette* another article was published in favour of Galt. Again he was seen as one who put together a "delightful union of the humorous and pathetic."[97] In another enthusiastic example, a critic wrote, in a review for *Lawrie Todd,* that he was tempted to think that Galt was in possession of a magic spell which enabled him to create characters so real and original:

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[93] Review of *The Member: An Autobiography, The Spectator* 4 (14 May 1831): 474.
[94] [Henry Mackenzie], Review of *The Annals of the Parish, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (May 1821): 204, 203.
[95] From now on *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* will be referred to as *Maga* in the text, an abbreviation used by William Blackwood himself.
[96] John Wilson, "Letter of Thanks From an Occasional Contributor," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (June 1822): 741, 743.
[97] Review of *The Provost, Literary Gazette*, 22 June 1822, 386-87.

"He possesses, in a most eminent degree, that peculiar talent which, to this day, makes Robinson Crusoe a thing of tangible memory and actual existence."[98]

Apart from this praise for his verisimilitude another positive feature noted was Galt's understanding of contemporary social and economic issues. For example, in the same review for *Lawrie Todd,* Galt's ability to understand political economy was again emphasized: his book itself was a "treatise in political economy."[99] *The Spectator* and *Fraser's Magazine* praised Galt's style both in terms of his political analysis and his ability and versatility in writing fictitious autobiography.[100] Furthermore, he noted that exactly Galt's style was a contribution to the metaphysical understanding. The author of the review in *Fraser's Magazine* began first by explaining what an autobiography means:

> [it] combines, in a more eminent degree than any other species of writing, instruction and delight. Those mental phenomena whose series constitutes feeling and thought, can only be ascertained by an attentive survey of our own minds, or by the accurately recorded emotions of others. The man, therefore, who faithfully discloses the workings of his heart and mind, who confesses not only his vices, but what, with Rousseau, we deem a harder task, his frailties and his follies – who, in proud candour, dares to exhibit himself not only as vicious but ridiculous – contributes a more useful offering to the stress of metaphysical learning, than he who brings whole volumes of ethical theories.

Fraser's Magazine wrote about *The Member* that it had a "deep sagacity" and was of the "highest political import." The author

> with smiling humour, but profound prudence, observes more or less upon every important question that has recently agitated the councils of the nation…The currency, the corn-laws, agricultural distress and disturbances, foreign affairs and domestic policy, and the theories of utilitarians and economist, are successfully canvassed.[101]

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[98] Review of *Lawrie Todd, Literary Gazette*, 30 January 1830, 67.
[99] Ibid., 68.
[100] Review of *The Member: An Autobiography*, *Fraser's Magazine* 5 (April 1832): 369; and review of *The Member: An Autobiography*, *The Spectator* 4 (14 May 1831): 474.
[101] Review of *The Member*, *Fraser's Magazine*: 371, 374.

On the whole, they thought that Galt reflected the main merits of daily and intellectual life of the Scottish nation during that period. This period was still the last part of what has been called the Golden Age of Scottish Enlightenment, when universalist knowledge and breadth of understanding was appreciated. Therefore it could be argued that Galt was appreciated as a true Enlightenment writer, a point which will be more extensively examined in the forth chapter.

The negative criticisms of Galt rest mostly on his alleged inferiority to Scott. The editor of *Edinburgh Review* and a major critic Francis Jeffrey's most influential essay contributed to the shift of mood in Galt's criticisms.[102] His article in the *Edinburgh Review* dealt not only with most of Galt's major published works up to that time, like *The Entail* and *Ringan Gilhaize*, but also included treatment of other writers like John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart, who were both very important members of the Blackwood circle. Not necessarily condemning the authors in the article itself, Jeffrey found a subtle way to reflect, most accurately, the Edinburgh literati's general conviction about Galt's and these other authors' works, namely that they were "secondary Scotch novels," by giving his article this very title. As P. H. Scott also points out, the article was not totally deprecating, but emphasised that these authors were inferior to Walter Scott.[103]

Jeffrey does say in this article that Galt is very competent in singling out social traits peculiar to contemporary Scottish society. He wrote that Galt's novels had "traits of sly and sarcastic sagacity, and occasionally softened and relieved by touches of unexpected tenderness and simple pathos, all harmonised by the same truth to nature and fine sense of national peculiarity." In some aspects, Galt was even compared and grouped

[102] Scott, "Social and Economic Theories," 105.
[103] Ian Jack, *Oxford History of English Literature*, Vol. 10 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 226.

together with Scott: "there is also more systematic, though very good-humoured, sarcasm, and a more distinct moral, or unity of didactic purpose, in most of his writings, than it would be easy to discover in the playful, capricious, and fanciful sketches of his great master." [104]

So, the far more positive reviews of Galt had made clear, during his lifetime, that he was in many ways acceptable to a contemporary readership. It was not only agreed that he had a talent for creating characters that largely resembled the true personalities of Scottish people in rural areas, but also that he was proficient in the political and social theories of his time and so was able to express them in his works. Almost always after reading a work of Galt, Walter Scott commented that there was something in his works: that he had a good style or a deep and powerful language.[105] The very feature that so far had brought him praise, his realism, now subjected him to criticism when he was compared to Scott. The same realism was now received as not refined enough, but vulgar.

Clearly the general problem of Galt was, therefore, not his content, since he was appreciated for his understanding of social issues, political manoeuvres and political economy. The disdain which his works evoked among the new Scottish critics was due to his style — his audacious way of putting forward characters and the manners and speech of Scots in front of an Edinburgh audience of gentility.[106] As Olivia Smith and Robert Crawford argue, language and civilisation started to be associated with each other. Civilization came to be seen as a linguistic concept and created a ground where language discriminated the refined and the civilized from the vulgar and the savage. So language

[104] Francis Jeffrey, *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review*, Vol. 3 (London: Brown, Green and Longmans, 1844), 499, 500.
[105] Ian Gordon, *John Galt: The Life of a Writer* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1972), 76.
[106] Olivia Smith, *The Politics of Language 1791-1818* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), vii; also Robert

itself was subject to improvement and Scots (the language) needed to be improved into English. Thus Galt's language was perceived as old-fashioned, as Margaret Oliphant (a major author and biographer) later called it. Jeffrey's review exposed this issue in the field of Galt criticism. The perception of him as not being genteel enough for refined society blocked his career to a certain extent. P. H. Scott says that this "reflected, or provoked a reaction to the novels which began to assert itself."[107] The derided aspect, the feature that Galt's contemporaries found not to their liking, was vulgarity. Jeffrey refers several times to how vulgar he was: *The Ayrshire Legatees* had "too much vulgarity"; *The Steamboat* was a "series of vulgar stories"; *The Entail* was marked with a "wilful vulgarity."[108] The fact that Galt used Scots not only in dialogue but also in narrative increased this perception of vulgarity. Outside a poetical context, Scots was very much associated with the lower classes and the sign of uneducated, "unenlightened" men whereas English was the language of formality and intellectuality.[109] Furthermore, it was the sign of improvement, as Sir John Sinclair made so clear in his *Observations on the Scottish Dialect* in 1782. English was "of use to my countrymen…particularly those whose object it is to have some share in the administration of national affairs." For those who wanted to get on, "new manners must be assumed, and a new language adopted."[110]

Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 18-22.

[107] Scott, "Social and Economic Theories," 105-06.

[108] [Francis Jeffrey], "Secondary Scottish Novels," in *Edinburgh Review* (October 1823): 160, 163, 178.

[109] J. Derrick McClure, "Scots in Dialogue: Some Uses and Implications," in his *Scots and Its Literature* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995), 87. For the use of Scots see also Manfred Gorlach (ed), *Focus on: Scotland* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing, 1985); on the complexity of the language and nation relationship in Scotland, see Janet Sorensen, *The Grammar of Empire in Eighteenth-Century British Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[110] Sinclair, cited in Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, 24-25. Likewise, James Elphinston wrote a whole volume on the Scottish Dialect, *Propriety Ascertained in Her Picture: or, English speech and spelling rendered mutual guides* (London: John Walter, 1787), claimed Sinclair a real patriot with his efforts to improve his nation . Indeed, writers such as James Beattie and James Bannantine attacked the

Galt's characters like Balwhidder in *the Annals*, as Jeffrey mentioned, were on the contrary very orthodox, "zealous Presbyterians, without learning or habits of speculation, given to old fashioned prejudices."[111] On the whole, the fact that Galt's characters did not share the contemporary gentility and were not filtered through contemporary social taste made it difficult for them to find acceptance.

James Croker, a critic in the *Quarterly Review*, was "pleased and affected by the Chronicle of Dalmailing." However, "some expressions put into the mouth of Mr Cayenne… are of a brutal and shocking impiety…which no gentleman could have uttered and which no Christian minister should have recorded."[112] Both his vocabulary and use of Scots were, thus, criticised. This topic was also put into the following ironic serial conversation in *Maga* where Christopher North (Wilson, the writer himself) and the shepherd (James Hogg) discuss Mr Galt.

> North: "*Mr Galt is a man of genius…His humour is rich, rare and racy…He is conversant, not only with many modes and manners of life, but with much of its hidden and mysterious spirit*."
> Shepherd: "*He's aften unco coorse*."
> North: *"True, James, he is not so uniformly delicate and refined as you are in your prose compositions*."[113]

This farcical extract surely is a good example of how Galt's ability to write about social issues was over-shadowed by the fact that his style was not refined enough for most of Edinburgh's polite society.

A good example of how Galt was neglected, even by Blackwoods, can be found in Oliphant's extensive work on Blackwood's company, especially after the death of William Blackwood who had perceived Galt as a second Scott and of great importance

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pro-English for this. Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, 26.
[111] Jeffrey, "Secondary Scotch Novels," 163.
[112] [J. W. Croker], Review of *Annals of the Parish*, *Quarterly Review* 147 (April 1821): 153.

for the company. Although Oliphant made a detailed analysis of the Blackwood circle, Galt was featured in it only marginally and obtained faint praise.[114] Knowing that the company was considering a re-edition of Galt's works, she concluded by remarking that he was "one whose great temporary reputation, very real while it lasted, fell for a time into oblivion, — but is, we hope, rising again into a modest revival." It was true that Galt's reputation had declined drastically in the 1830s, as compared to the 20s when most of his books were published. One can say that it declined after he left Blackwood's House. William Blackwood had been greatly supportive and gave motivation to Galt and surely Galt's occupation in the Canadas was another obstacle. Various literary historians have put other reasons forward: he was working too hastily and was struggling financially, thus by producing in excess, he soon used up his creative resources. Another reason is that he became involved with Upper Canada, when he did not write prolifically. One of his contemporaries wrote that "few men of genius have been more prodigal of their gift or more careless in its exercise than John Galt" and added that if he would have stayed and written in Britain rather than going to Canada he would have been as good as Walter Scott.[115] In any case, his falling into neglect was true, at least for a while. Some of his books appeared in 1841-42 in Blackwood's Standard Novels series; but he was not read widely at that time.[116] As a solution, Oliphant proposed a book on *The Beauties of Galt* signalling, actually, the coming of a new era of perceptions of Scottishness, emphasising the tranquil and simple beauties of Scottish life.

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[113] [John Wilson], "Noctes Ambrosianae, No LII," *Blackwood's Magazine* 28 (November 1830): 843.
[114] Margaret Oliphant, *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons, Their Magazine and Friends* (New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1897).
[115] William Roughead, *The Fatal Countess and other Studies* (Edinburgh: W. Green and Son, 1924), 261-62.
[116] Cited in Keith Costain, "The Rhetoric of Realism: Art and Ideas in the Fiction of John Galt," (PhD diss., Washington University, June 1969), iv.

Another perceived drawback during his lifetime was that he was not typical of the literati. Although Galt was acquainted with most of the intellectuals of his time, he was not really a core member of any of the existing literary circles. Literary accounts of his time show a mutual distain between Galt and literary high society. He was seen as exceptional in his presentation of Scottish characters, often funny; but at the same time he was not among literati like Burns or Hogg. According to Robert Gillies, who was an author, autobiographer and critic, and who was very well acquainted with the Edinburgh literati, he was merely an author that wrote with a style of *eccentric naiveté*. As he states it in a more hostile way, "Galt held a distinguished place…he might therefore, well suppose, as he too harshly did, that the road to fame and wealth by literature was open and smooth before him, *ad infinitum*, and found no end to the ridiculous exhibitions of Scottish character and phraseology in which he delighted." In the eyes of Gillies, Galt's career was the more remarkable because his education was not suitable for a literary man, but for the pursuit of trade and commerce. He "was in his literary capacity, self educated, and to scholastic acquirements made no pretension;" however, once he commenced as an author he showed much perseverance. Gillies at the same time pointed out the exceptional realism in the various works he had published by Blackwood. Thus, by no means could he be stigmatised as a "mere book-maker." Gillies also tried to give an explanation of why Galt was no longer widely read in the early 1850s. Pointing to the temporariness of his topics, saying that although he was very popular in his own day, "such productions would not sell equally now-a-days." Gillies, in other words, put Galt's works into the category of colportage books, as in best-sellers which are consumed quickly but do not have a great impact on later generations.[117] It could therefore be said

[117]Author's italics, R. Gillies, *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran, Including Sketches and Anecdotes of the*

that the snobbish intellectual attitude of some of his contemporaries put him down as a trivial writer. It was enough to see that Galt was a man of trade and gave as much importance to it as to the occupation with literature to make him such.

To sum up, Galt was often praised in the reviews written about his books, but his vulgarity was also pointed out. He was seen as a writer who did not, or simply refused to, keep pace with the refinement of the manners of his time. There was Galt's use of Scots. Scots has been applied before to literature, and it had a literary heritage, but in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century it was in decline and was used as a jocular means.[118] Walter Scott, for instance, made use of it, but he had used it only in lower class characters' dialogues, whereas Galt felt free to use it also in the narrative voice. The fall of his writings into neglect was, of course, also related to the fact that his later writings did not rise as much as interest as his earlier ones, though *Lawrie Todd* and *The Member* are reminiscent of Galt's earlier achievements.

We may finally remark that Galt's reputation extended beyond Britain during his lifetime. Although he was translated into French, Russian and German, he was viewed more often as a travel writer and reporter from the New World than as a novelist.[119] Moir related that his novels were "regarded in the light of philosophical brochures" on the continent and especially in France.[120] In the *Englischer Bibliothek*, published in Karlsruhe, which was published as the latest news from the English-writing world, he was just a reporter of the first settlers in Ohio, whereas Hogg and Wilson were

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Most Distinguished Characters, from 1794-1849 (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), 57, 58.

[118] Bradford Allen Booth , "Introduction: John Galt, A Study in the Scottish Vernacular Novel," in *The Gathering of the West* by John Galt (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1939), 8.

[119] He was also translated into Swedish (*Annals)* and Italian (*Majolo)*, but not before the twentieth century.

[120] David M. Moir, *Biographical Memoir of the Author*, National Library of Scotland [NLS], Miscellaneous, MS 9856/35, xciv.

represented by their literary stories.[121] Likewise, the French critics although noticing some originality, simply compared him to Walter Scott, but also saw him less brilliant than Wilson. The *Bibliographie Universalle* gives a good example Philaréte Charles noted: "Inférieur à Walter Scott pour la profondeur et la variété, moins vif et moins brillant que le Professeur Wilson, ce Diderot de l'Angleterre moderne, il a quelque chose de la finesse précise de Duclos et même quelques nuances de cette invention originale et saisissante qui caractérise le style de La Bruyére."[122] In general, except for the critics in the 1830s, Galt was greatly neglected in France until Lucien Leclaire published his book in 1954.[123]

2.2 Galt and the Kailyard: Approaching the Twentieth Century

There was a new publication of collected works of Galt, published in 1895-1896. This collection included most of his famous books, but not *Ringan Gilhaize*, *Lawrie Todd*, *Boggle Corbet*, *The Member* and *The Radical*. His Canadian, political and major religious books remained neglected until a much later date. Basically, all the books that had been published by Blackwood were now reissued.

It was S. R. Crockett, one of the key writers of the Kailyard movement, which contributed greatly to a revived interest in Scottish fiction and John Galt, who initiated this project. Originally, the school took its name from its founder Ian Maclaren's (John Watson) work *Besides the Bonnie Brier-Bush,* written in 1894. J. M Barrie and Crockett

[121] K. von Kraling, "Die Ersten Ansiedler am Ohio," *Englischer Bibliothek: Eine Fortlaufende Auswahl des Anziehendsten und des Neuesten aus Englischen Taschenbüchern und Zeitungen* (Karlsruhe: G. Braun, 1835), 164-77.
[122] Quoted in Henri Gibault, *John Galt: Romancier Ecossais* (Grenoble: L'Université des Langues et Lettres, 1979), 7.
[123] Lucien Leclaire, *Roman Régionaliste dans les Iles Britanniques, 1800-1950* (Paris: de Bussac, 1954) also published in English as *A General Analytical Bibliography of the Regional Novelists of the British Isles, 1800-1950* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1954).

became the most eminent Kailyarders.[124] During the industrial age the Kailyard emerged as a school that described a parochial Scotland with nostalgia for the quiet and unspoiled Scottish landscape. To this the public responded with enthusiasm. A quarter of a million copies of Maclaren's work were sold in Britain and half a million in the USA. Kailyard was simple in style, entertaining and with a touch of Presbyterian morality. Both Maclaren and Crockett were ministers of the Free Church and Barrie was brought up in the Free Church. All had a theological attitude to life and an ability for writing light prose.[125] Kailyard offered a pastoral image of rural Scotland that had remained supposedly untouched by the changing world of the late nineteenth century. It had the formula of an omniscient narrator, a rural setting, an episodic format, was composed in a comic Scots language and the key characters were the laird, the minister or the schoolmaster.

Samuel Crockett himself wrote the introduction to Galt's works and there he stated that he admired Galt's ability to portray a peaceful country life. In his words, "there is no book in our national literature which conveys so melodious and continuous an impression of peace…restfulness like a Scottish Sabbath day in the older times."[126] Crockett was convinced that an edition of Galt's books would sell much better now (in the 1890s) than they had ever before and he persuaded David Meldrum, of Blackwood's, to edit the new edition. The Blackwoods responded to this advice immediately.[127]

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[124] This title refers to lines from a traditional song reworked by Burns: "There grows a bonnie brier-bush in our kail-yard." Literature on this topic has shown that there is a difference between Maclaren's Kailyard and that of his followers. See Gillian Shepherd, "The Kailyard," in *Scottish Literature*, vol. 3 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988).

[125] Alan Bold, *Modern Scottish Literature* (London, New York: Longman, 1983), 106.

[126] See John Galt, "Introduction," by Samuel R. Crocket, *Annals of the Parish*, ed. David S. Meldrum (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1895-96).

[127] Samuel R. Crocket, 'Scottish National Humour," *The Contemporary Review* 67 (January-June 1895): 527. This is the article where Crocket also explains how much the Kailyard and Galt had in common.

Before considering the reviews of this period and more, Galt's position in the Kailyard in more depth, it is necessary to give some cultural-political context for this phase of Scottish literary activity. By the mid-century, two pillars of Scottishness, the Kirk and the education system, were shaken to their foundations. After the Union the peculiarly Scottish education system and the Kirk had both become symbols of the nation. However, from 1712 onwards, the unity of the Kirk was destroyed by the various Secessions.[128] Then, before the mid nineteenth century, came the Disruption and the establishment of the Free Kirk. The Scottish educational system, defined by its emphasis on philosophy and broad general courses was increasingly influenced by the English system that concentrated on specific disciplines. The Education Act of 1889 enforced this general trend.[129] Thus, Scotland was losing its most traditional institutions one by one, due to the specialisation demanded by industrialisation. This created a backdraft of nostalgia for the past.

When Britain in the late nineteenth century became increasingly urbanised and industrialised, rural Scotland, or the Highlands, became a place for escape from modern life.[130] Just as the historical novels of Scott had initiated a trend towards the Scottish Highlands becoming a holiday destination, the Kailyard literature, towards the end of the century, catered to these desires for an unspoiled natural purity in the Lowlands. A general view of these decades might be offered: Scottish realism declined and its 'reality' was manipulated. Scottishness now meant Victorian sentimentality, parochialism and tartan stereotypes. The shift was towards writing for tourists. That writing depicted a

[128] For the Secessions, see John H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960).
[129] George Elder Davie, *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and Her Universities in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1961), 3.

Highland tradition and the manners tended to "Victorian Balmorality". There were hunting parties and experience of the wild, the savage. In short, a total romanticisation of the manners and literature of the Highlands took place. Duncan Glen remarked that Scott with his reputation and his books on the Highlands during this period was one of the best tourist agents Scotland has ever had.[131] The peculiarity of Scotland's culture, which Galt portrays with fierce reality, gave way to the irresistible temptation towards accommodating the high culture of the English and their Victorian values, which trivialised and romanticised Scottish culture.

The sentimental taste of that time did not confine itself to the production of sentimental works but also affected the perception of works that had been published long before. In Galt's case, Kailyarders not only prompted the republishing of his works, but also interpreted him in the light of their own views. Likewise, the popular anthology entitled *Whistle-Binkie*, first published in 1832, continued to be very popular well into the 80s.[132] Looking at the concerns of this anthology, treatments of local subjects of a rural nature stand out and helped in the readers to rediscover Galt's works, which were related to the movement.

Although Galt was promoted by the Kailyarders as a writer who epitomised this new idyllic and parochial perception of Scottishness, this period was quite contradictory in terms of his perception. This was again a period when Galt was successful as a popular

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[130] See Neil Davidson, "Scottish History and Highland Mythology," in *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 128-39.
[131] Glen, *Scottish History*, 93.
[132] John D. Carrick ed., *Whistle-Binkie. A Collection of Comic and Sentimental Songs, Chiefly Original* (Glasgow: n.g, 1832).

writer, but this character damaged his reputation in the eyes of some intellectual Victorian critics.[133]

As Galt was seen as an ancestor of the Kailyard School, according to the intellectuals, the status of his works was considerably diminished. Kailyard was denounced by the "serious Scottish novelists" of this time because they "reduced Scotland to the size of a Kailyard or cabbage patch."[134] Apparently, his interest in village-rural life was one of the major reasons for putting Galt under the roof of this school for some critics. Crockett's review for instance takes Galt totally out of his social and political context and emphasises Galt's ability to reflect the greatly admired tranquillity. The critics who despised the Kailyard saw his work only as an embodiment of whimsical nostalgia depicting worthless rural life with a great sentimentality. In short, Kailyarders were moralizers who were exploiting a popular market for sentimentality and Galt was seen as one of them.[135] The social and cultural significance of the Kailyarders remains of interest to today's critics. Yet in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, texts of the Kailyard school were perceived as misrepresentations of Scottish life.[136] It is certain, however, that Galt's views were far from the peculiar sentimentality of the Kailyarders. The next two reviews are interesting in this respect, as they resurrected Galt from the Kailyard image.

These reviews put the emphasis on those works of Galt that were concerned with the Scottish Presbyterian past. They also highlighted the influences of the Edinburgh Enlightenment on his thought. One of these critics was Sir George Douglas. In his book

[133] Henri Gibault remarks that "le 'kailyard' aura été un danger et une Pierre de touche." *Romancier Ecossais*, 6.
[134] Bold, *Scottish Literature*, 105.
[135] Scott, "Social and Economic Theories," 103.

The Blackwood Group, published in 1897, he tried to analyse Galt within the Blackwood circle, but in a more extensive way than Mrs Oliphant had done in 1847.[137] The most remarkable feature was his emphasis on how, in methods of description and writing style, Galt's works are "more interesting than Scott's." He maintained that Galt "may be called the forerunner of the Realistic movement in Scottish fiction."[138] *Ringan Gilhaize* was described as "a neglected masterpiece" in the edition of the work, published in the following year.[139]

The other and more important critic, J. H. Millar, produced a review of the collected edition in *Maga*, June 1896. John Millar was very well acquainted with Kailyard movement and its affiliations. He wrote an anti-Kailyard attack in *New Review,* 1895. His Galt criticism is also in a sense an anti-Kailyard argument. Strikingly, although he was an ardent critic of the Kailyard, his review concentrated on a very different aspect of Galt. He was perhaps the first to contextualise him within the Enlightenment, emphasising the very values of his social insight and realism which some of his contemporaries had admired so greatly in him. He connected Galt with the Scots Renaissance of the second half of the eighteenth century; for Galt had allegedly achieved "an observation [which] amounts to philosophic insight [of] the developmental forces beneath contemporary events." Millar saw the miniature image of the nation in the towns that Galt had described in the *Annals* and *The Provost*. He added: "and to achieve dramatic history in this way, embodying the general in the particular is, perhaps, what has

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[136] Joachim Schwend and Horst W. Drescher eds., *Studies in Scottish Fiction: Twentieth Century*, vol. 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990), 7.
[137] Sir George Douglas, *The Blackwood Group* (London, Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1897). His group consisted of John Wilson, John Galt, David M. Moir, Susan Ferrier, Michael Scott and Thomas Hamilton.
[138] Ibid., 92-93.
[139] Galt, "Introduction," by Samuel R. Crocket, *Ringan Gilhaize* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1898).

been done by no one else."[140] His definite separation of Galt from the Kailyard distances his observations from the sentimental nationalism of critics like Crocket. This approach facilitated his view that Galt's works were more realistic and presented a complete picture of life. In this sense Galt's vulgarity and coarseness, which had been seen as so disturbing to those concerned with gentility, turned out to be Galt's major accomplishment.

This shows the extent to which some of the new Scottish literary writers started to emancipate themselves from the Anglo-centric point of view of former critics, who had trivialised the use of Scottish topics and characters. These new critics thought that British society consisted of smaller units, rather than being a homogeneous entity. In this way the societies that Galt depicted could be seen as part of this heterogeneous structure, rather than underdeveloped parts of a single British society. It is interesting to note that in recent years new attention has been given to Scottish working class literature from that same period. For example Donaldson argues during most of nineteenth-century Scottish literature was written for a Scottish working-class readership through the medium of the popular press and not for an English middle-class: unlike Kailyard, it portrayed Scottish life realistically both in terms of characters and language. [141] Whereas the Kailyard writers, following Scott, used standard English for the narrative voice and Scots only for lower class characters, these working class novels used Scots, like Galt, throughout. In the nineteenth century it would have been unthinkable to compare these working class literatures with Galt, though it would now be a fruitful approach to see Galt in relation to

[140] John H. Millar, "The Novels of John Galt," *Blackwood's Magazine* 159 (June 1896): 871.
[141] William Donaldson, *Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland: Language, Fiction and the Press* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986), 145-50, 148.

this genre, not only in terms of its similar linguistic usage, but also in its interest in social change, in contrast to Kailyard's portrayal of a static Scottish countryside.

Millar's reading of Galt in an Enlightenment context did not prompt an instantaneous change in the general reception of Galt. Not only the reception of Galt, but Scottish history for example, was still very much dominated by English-centred views. Gordon Donaldson, the Historiographer Royal, remarked that the "Scottish historians themselves saw things through English eyes, and capitulated to the English point of view." He argued that there was "the spell of the Victorian era and the concepts of English history as the embodiment of ordered progress."[142] At the turn of the century James Leatham wrote that Galt "had had his day" and he continued with the contention that if he was not very well known among contemporaries that was because he deserved obscurity, since the pictures he had been transmitting were not real pictures at all.[143] Likewise Jane Findlater, the novelist, saw Galt as the forerunner of the modern school of the "Scotch" writer who is "a sinner above the common in the over-emphasis of racial characteristics" and remarked on his lack of niceness that:

> Galt's novels have gone far to establish the unpleasant popular idea of the Scottish character. He is very unfair to his countrymen: all his vital characters – those that make his books – are singularly unlovely. Those that are meant to be good are very vulgar: those that are bad are not credited with one redeeming feature…greed, coarseness, meanness are his constant themes…His men are all misers.[144]

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[142] Quoted in Paul H. Scott, *Scotland: A Concise Cultural History* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1993), 30-31. See also James Kirk, ed., "A Backward Nation" in *Scotland's History* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1995).

[143] James Leatham, *John Galt, the First of the Kailyarders: A Neglected Man of Genius and Why?* (Turrif, Deveron Press, 1920), 8.

[144] Jane H. Findlater, *Stones From a Glass House* (London: James Nisbet and Co, 1904), 95-96. This ties in with the wider debate which was one on Scottish Kailyard that was generated by the publication of *The House with the Green Shutters* by Goerge D. Brown in 1901. Cf. Ian Campbell, *Kailyard* (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1981).

John Ayscough wrote partly against these views. According to him, although Galt contained a very peculiar genius, the faults in the novels were not because of his lack of niceties and realism but due to Galt's haste in writing his works, his characters needed a fuller and less hurried presentation.[145]

Although we may conclude that, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Galt started to be more appreciated for his skills of historicism and for creating real characters Francis Jeffrey's classification of Galt as a secondary Scotch novelist continued to dominate. He remained a novelist of secondary importance who tried to imitate Walter Scott and, as Susan Ferrier and Margaret Oliphant had said, was too vulgar for the refined tastes of the intellectual elites of Edinburgh.

2.3 Galt in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

In the twentieth century, Scotland was seen as an integrated part of Britain. Scotland was felt to be culturally and politically absorbed into England and an equal member of the British union. However, the British Empire was slowly deteriorating, so that being part of the backbone of the empire could no longer inspire great pride among the Scots. For Scotland the two world wars, the decline of the British Empire, economic depression and the prolonged process of industrial decline were all severe pressures. Its heavy industry, such as the Clydeside shipyards, though profitable during the war years and upon which Scotland' economy depended, declined, and state support and interventionist policies were adopted. The self-confident and buoyant days during the Victorian period of Scottish capitalism were over, and Scotland needed to adapt itself to the changing

[145] For commentary on Galt see John Ayscough, *Levia-Pondera: An Essay Book* (London: Longman,

balances within the wider European context.[146] Scots started to think about Scotland's place within Britain; difficulties in adapting to a post-imperial world structure (both in economy and political power); urbanization problems and the consequent popular unrest in big cities were confronted. This pointed towards a complicated period of introspective search, attempting to redefine Scottish culture, politics and nationhood. One of the major developments of this period was the formation of a modern nationalist party in Scotland, the Scottish National Party in 1934.[147] At the same time, Scotland's role in the wider international community became an issue. [148]

In literary circles attempts were made to popularise Scottish literature by comparing some authors to internationally acknowledged writers such as Gogol and Dostoyevski, and others attempted to preserve and further develop a peculiar tradition of Scottishness. The major belief about literature in Scotland was, as Robert Crawford, a literary critic and historian, says, that Scots developed "a 'British Literature' throughout both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, before a more explicitly nationalist, post-British literary consciousness came to the fore in the twentieth century."[149] Exemplifying this conviction, authors such as Hugh MacDiarmid, Lewis Grassic Gibbon and Neil Miller Gunn prompted a cultural reawakening in Scotland, especially during the inter-war years. They searched for a genre of a literature that was typically Scottish, a pure

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1913), 29-102, 36.
[146] McCrone, *Understanding Scotland*, 12.
[147] It was the combination of the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party. These nationalist parties did not have much electoral significance until the 1960s, but did have an impact on the intellectual atmosphere.
[148] Cairns Craig, "Introduction," in *The History of Scottish Literature,* vol. 4 (Aberdeen: University Press, 1987), 1.
[149] See Crawford, *Devolving English Literature,* 9. See also Hugh MacDiarmid, "Contemporary Scottish Literature and the National Question, 1965," in *Selected Essays of Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. Duncan Glen

Scottishness of Scottish literature, moving away form the anglicised trend. The existing literature for them parodied an older Scotland dressed in tartan and sentimental notions of Scottishness. The failure to keep Scotland's culture and languages alive, in their eyes, led to an increasing Anglicisation that suppressed any new and original expression of national character. These thoughts helped to stimulate a demand for Scottish dailies and periodicals, *The Scots Independent, Scotland, The Scottish Educational Journal* and such like. In the 1920s one of the most eminent characters was MacDiarmid (the pseudonym of C. M. Grieve). He was very influential with descriptions of what Scottish literature and Scottish character and culture was. However, this also set rules as to what good and bad literature was that were going to dominate most of the twentieth century perceptions of Scottish literature. According to him it was important to produce a literature not just to please an English reading audience, but also to describe Scotland in its greatness and the unique character of its culture. It was important for him to show that Scotland was distinct, that it should keep its individuality as a nation, and gain an international reputation. [150]

In his article about Scottish literature and the national question he explains that the main aim "was to revive the use of Scots as the literary medium, to encourage creative literature in Gaelic, and alongside these to improve the literary standard of writings in English by Scottish authors," these all to increase and release the Scottish genius.

(London: Jonathan Cape, 1969).

[150] Christopher M. Grieve［H. MacDiarmid］to William Russel Aitken, 25 February 1938, quoted in *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. Alan Bold (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), 576. For MacDiarmid's influence on the later generations in see, H. Scott and A. C. Davis, eds., *Age of MacDiarmid: Hugh MacDiarmid and His Influence on Contemporary Scotland* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1980).

He was interested in bringing the two "native" languages of Scotland, namely Scots and Gaelic, back into their deserved place in Scottish education and literature. Scots, as McDiarmid used it, had an alien appearance because Scottish literature was written from the eyes of English tradition. The Scottish poetic tradition after Burns "took the wrong turning and became a matter of mindless doggerel." The new generation, rightly, had to go back to the literary traditions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that incorporated "social realism and scorn of religiosity." As a result MacDiamid created a neglect of nineteenth century sentimental, romantic and historical writing. The end was that the new movement "started to recover Scottish independence culturally and politically."[151] During these years Scottish Nationalism became a crucial factor in the formation of this cultural Scottish Renaissance. "Therefore," says Caroline Macafee, it is "important to take nationalism into account in any attempt to understand the linguistic situation in Scotland."[152] By the mid-century this moreover turned into a re-flourishing of written forms of Scots, asserting its autonomous, well-developed and highly distinctive features as a language.[153] MacDiarmid's ideas (not his Communist convictions, but his literary ones), although having little impact on the popular mind set, gained wide recognition from critics and authors. Within this tradition Walter Scott surely lost some of his prominence, whereas Galt's reputation, except in respect of his 'bad' influence on Kailyarders, increased and he obtained his place among the "Neglected Classics."[154]

One of those who, perhaps, saved Galt from his label as the forefather of the Kailyard was George Douglas Brown. He was seen as one of the fore-runners of this new

[151] MacDiarmid, "National Question, 1965," 213, 205, 210, 211.
[152] Caroline Macafee, "Nationalism and the Scots Renaissance Now," in *Focus on: Scotland*, 5, 7.
[153] J. Derrick McClure, "Scots in Dialogue," 87.
[154] Marion C. Lochhead, "Neglected Classics: *The Entail*," *Scots Magazine* 5 (June 1926), 229-34.

generation of the twentieth century writers. He hated the image that the Kailyard had initiated and had published *The House with the Green Shutters* (1901). Contrary to the Victorian literature of sentimentality, the Kailyard idyll and morally positive depictions of Scotland, these new novelists showed Scotland in a dramatic way, with all its bitterness, realism, malice and gloom.[155] Brown, who like Galt was born in Ayrshire, was indeed regarded by many contemporaries as the author who enriched and developed Scottish literature; he had shattered the Kailyard image. Brown was nurtured, like Galt, by many of his country's traditions and international literature. Among the Scottish authors he respected was Galt. *The Spectator* wrote that Brown's "masters are Galt and Balzac."[156] Brown was astonished by Galt's ability to choose the most important and interesting parts of his observations and to reproduce these.[157] He praised Galt's realistic depiction of the western Lowlands' life and language. As a result Brown encouraged and helped Douglas Meldrum to edit Galt's novels for the Blackwoods.[158]

It was a period where there was, inevitably, an attempt to re-establish old values of Scottishness. Galt was re-remembered by publishers. Series such as Everyman's Library, the World's Classics and Nelson's Classics issued his texts. More importantly, research on Galt and his life started to increase. Another reason that more attention was devoted to the writer was that the centenary of his death was approaching, and as Jennie Aberdein said, "it was time that the recognition which his own age denied him should be freely given." [159] After his works were reissued, starting in the 1940s, Galt was being

[155] Bold says that thematically and chronologically twentieth-century Scottish literature began with Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters*. Bold, *Scottish Literature*, 108, 110.
[156] See James Bridie, *Tedious and Brief* (London: Constable, 1944), 98, 94, 152.
[157] See letter George D. Brown to David Meldrum in ibid.
[158] James Veitch, *George Douglas Brown: Author of the House with the Green Shutters* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1952), 90.
[159] Jennie W. Aberdein, *John Galt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), xvi.

considered against theories about his times, for example for his adherence to the Scottish Enlightenment. His attempts at understanding history and society were among the topics most discussed. In short, these studies dealt with Galt's philosophical, social and religious views and the application of them in his fiction. This investigation showed it was still possible to find under the simple picture there was a theme of change and a deeper sophistication. The simplicity, perhaps for many represented an idyllic picture, hit a story of the ongoing changes in society, recording, among other things, the process of industrialisation in the west of Scotland and the opening up of new settlements and markets in the colonies.

One of the first substantial books which were devoted to aspects of Galt's life and work, especially the Canadian aspects, appeared in 1920 in Toronto.[160] This biography was followed by republications of his works, but this time with additions, like *Ringan Gilhaize* which appeared in the collected edition published by John Grant in Edinburgh in 1936. Apparently a pride in and need to emphasise Protestantism as an undercurrent in Scottish culture resulted in the remembering of Galt's book on the Covenanters.

This was followed by another biography, by Aberdein in the same year. As Costain comments, the new works on Galt "tend too often to dwell on the 'Beauties of Galt,' over-praising him as if to make up for previous neglect."[161] Aberdein tried to give a psychological analysis of Galt.[162] The same year an article was published in the 31st October issue of the *Times Literary Supplement*. Like Millar, the "Dominion and Parish: John Galt's Conquest of Two Worlds" (it was anonymous) placed Galt in the context of

[160] Robert K. Gordon, *John Galt* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1920).
[161] Costain, "Rhetoric of Realism," vi.
[162] He points out "it is important to recognise that Galt was groping towards the modern science of psychology." Aberdein, *John Galt*, xxi.

Scottish Enlightenment, which was called the "Scots Risorgimento." The article called Galt: "the father of the modern novel of analysis." Galt was, according to the author, endowed "with keen moral judgement and pity" and "a rich sense of absurdity."[163] The *Annals*, accordingly, contained delicate realistic detail like a Dutch painting, though was closer to the French in temperament. "*The Provost* indeed anticipates Balzac…or recalls Molière." The author saw in the particular the reflection of the universal – the non-parochial – "which is [according to him] one of the definitions of art."[164]

The two world wars had induced a new confidence and loyalty in Scotland. George Hewitt says that after the second there was a revival of interest in Scottish topics, such as in Scottish history. He gives a list of publications that confirmed this increase.[165] Perhaps, a new British national identity was rising that saw its identity not necessarily attached to England. The interest in Scottish topics led towards writing about a Scotland where things were really happening. It was not a historyless society, even though the decision-making institutions had moved south. People lived there and everyday life ought to interest writers as much as heroic romances. Now Cairn Craig might describe the contemporary complaint: "The de-historicized Scotland of unnoticed change might have represented something positive to Scott; it was to have turned sour by the 1940s and 1950s…Scotland in the present is a purgatorial eternity; it is a world of endless and appalling representation: beyond narrative; beyond change; outside history."[166] However, this sour feeling led to attempts to redefine Scottish history, literature and identity: not to

[163] "Dominion and Parish: John Galt's Conquest of Two Worlds," in *Times Literary Supplement*, 31 October 1936.
[164] Scott, "Social and Economic Theories," 113.
[165] Another example is the *Scottish Historical Review* that had ceased publication but after Second World War started again. George Hewitt, "Reformation to Revolution," in Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley, eds., *The Manufacture of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), 17.
[166] Cairn Craig, *Scotland Outside History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Literature*

perceive it just as a stagnant or non-existing history because of its lack of political decision taking institutions.

During this time of investigation, organisations started to flourish that supported research on Scottish scholarship. The Greenock Philosophical Society was one of them and it initiated some seminars on Galt. As Thomas Hamilton recorded,

> the committee [of The Greenock Philosophical Society] decided that a John Galt Memorial Lectureship be established and without tying the hands of future committees it was suggested that from time to time as circumstances permitted a lecture should be given on a purely Scottish subject and be associated with the name of John Galt.[167]

Papers were read which stimulated new questions and opened up new areas of research in Galt's works. A developing interest was the question of how accurate Galt's histories were. One of these papers was by William Brownlie, who probed the characters and history in Galt's novels, paying close attention to Scottish history from the novels' periods. His conclusion was realistic and precise: he stated that "the national story may be less spectacular than the *Annals* make it"; but he added that Galt's characters in the *Annals* were real-types from the period and further, that "on a virgin site, the transformation [brought in by industrialization] could be dramatic enough." He remarked too that the change Galt was reporting was really going on in that region during that period.[168] Thus he tried to give a more comprehensive background to the *Annals* by providing more details of social structure: of farming and mining; of the framework of trade, commerce and industry; of the educational system; and of local government and

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(Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), 40.

[167] Thomas W. Hamilton, *John Galt: The Man, His Life and Work*. John Galt Lecture, 1946 (Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works, 1946), 1-2.

administration. He did state that the real history was less impressive, but still emphasised the fact that there was a need for pictures of Scotland during the late eighteenth century and Galt was one of those who provided such. This work is an exceptional addition to the literature on Galt and his writing, giving a further insight into the novel. For his questioning was not merely on a theoretical basis; but he used historical facts and tried to find how much reality there was in Galt. Only C.H Whatley did this type of research after him, in 1979.[169]

The idea, that started with Millar, of putting Galt into the context of the Scottish Enlightenment received more detailed attention from the Swedish literary critic Erik Frykman. Both in his book *John Galt's Scottish Stories 1820-1823*,[170] and more prominently in his lecture given to the Greenock Philosophical Society, he brought the question of Galt and the Scottish Enlightenment to the foreground and drew attention – allowing K. M. Costain to comment further later on – to the books that were available to Galt in the Greenock Subscription Library.[171] He investigated Galt's social analysis and concluded that Galt reflected the notion of an organic society, and in that sense the smallness of the society he depicted did not matter.

Besides the composition of such monographs as F. H. Lyell's and Ruth Aldrich's in the twentieth century,[172] Galt's critical reputation started to find a place in the standard

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[168] William M. Brownlie, *John Galt: Social Historian (The Parish of Dalmailing 1760-1810)*, John Galt Lecture, 1951 (Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works , 1952), 12.
[169] See footnote 110.
[170] Ian Gordon, who also published a very comprehensive biography, *John Galt,* had made an edition of several of Galt's short stories besides other additions of Galt's books such as an original version of *Last of the Lairds* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1976).
[171] Eric Frykman, *John Galt and Eighteenth Century Scottish Philosophy*, John Galt Lecture, 1953 (Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works, 1954).
[172] To give some numbers: out of nine publications on Galt two have been American, two Canadian, one Swedish and one French. Frank H. Lyell, *A Study of the Novels of John Galt*, Vol. 8 (Princeton: University Press, 1942) and Ruth Aldrich, *John Galt* (Boston: Twayne, 1978).

histories of literature. These two mostly descriptive but comprehensive survey works are among the most important detailed accounts of the whole range of Galt's works. Both were undertaken by Americans, which draws attention to Galt's increasing fame in the international milieu. Although he got just a small and superficial mention in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, which was not surprising, he received more and more appreciation and space in later publications.[173] He was now also compared with internationally known writers. Beginning with Ernest Baker in 1935, all critics made remarks about Galt's abilities as a sociologist, denied that he was a provincial writer and held that he could bear comparison with Gogol or even Dostoyevski. They commented likewise on his awareness of contemporary social and economic change. Besides, there are Millar and Lindsay, who put more emphasis on Galt's Scottish flavour, especially in his language. Lindsay remarks "Galt's novels remain essentially a Scottish taste, for the same reason as to the poems of Ferguson. Both are affectionately involved with the nuances of the Scots tongue that much of their best work is not only untranslatable, but is only of limited interest to that outside majority of readers who have scant patience with what they are pleased to regard as 'dialect' writing."[174]

[173] See John H. Millar, *A Literary History of Scotland* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903); Alfred W. Ward…and A. R. Waller eds., *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. 12 (Cambridge: University Press, 1915); Ernest A. Baker, *The History of the English Novel*, Vol. 6 (London: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1935); Walter Allen, *The English Novel: A Short Critical History* (London: Phoenix House, 1954); Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958); David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961); Ian Jack, *English Literature, 1815-1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); Maurice Lindsay, *History of Scottish Literature* (London: Hale, 1977).

[174] Lindsay, *Scottish Literature*, 320.

2.4 Contemporary Galt Critics

In the second half of the century, starting in the 1960s, but particularly gaining speed towards the 80s, there emerged a new trend. In 1965 MacDiarmid pointed out that "there is word now that at least one of our five Scottish Universities is about to establish a course in Scottish literature for the ordinary M.A. class."[175] Scottish literature, partly withdrawn from its links with popular nationalism, became increasingly an academic pursuit. There had been Scottish cultural societies such as the Saltire Society founded in the 1930s, aiming to increase public awareness of Scotland's distinct natural and cultural heritage[176] and there had been lectures on Scottish literature in English literature courses. But a School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh was first established in 1951 and it fostered scholarly research on Scottish subjects such as the recording of folklore and regional ethnology and studies of traditional and changing ways of life. It also initiated a linguistic survey of Scotland.[177] Now, although the first English literature department was established at the University of Edinburgh in 1762, the first (and still the only) autonomous department of Scottish Literature was only founded in 1971 in the University of Glasgow.

However, there were other developments that contributed to more scholarly Scottish studies and literature. There are many who claim that after the referendum on home rule of 1979, after Scotland gained its own semi-state status, a trend developed towards a more self-confident notion of nation and nationalism that found reflection in

[175] MacDiarmid, "National Question," 214.
[176] See the Saltire Society Web Pages: www.saltire-society.demon.co.uk.
[177] Murray Pittock, *Invention of Scotland: the Stuart Myth and the Scottish Identity, 1638 to the Present*

literature. In turn, this may have brought about a more confined and precise look at literature. A confident nation did not have to look down on parochialism or on the use of colloquial language. Furthermore, in the academic area, the regionalisation of Enlightenment studies contributed to the progress of commentary on the Scottish one. Starting in the sixties the Scottish Enlightenment emerged as a distinct subject of scholarship. It set a line between the English and the Scottish phenomena, as it set it for the Irish. As Robertson points out

> It was in Scotland that the essential elements of the Enlightenment were to be found: a backward and a modern world existing in close chronological and geographical proximity, along with patriotic groups and societies concentrating attention on economic and social problems. A "comprehensive study" of the Scottish Enlightenment had accordingly become one of the most necessary pieces of research in eighteenth-century European history.[178]

With these developments Galt began to be seen as a part of the Scottish literary canon to be studied in Scottish literature courses and became a part of literature departments' syllabus. The two ways of reading him during his lifetime and in the nineteenth century, namely, Galt as an intellectual who reflected various contemporary issues well and Galt as a vulgar popular writer, both found new reflections in these research. In recent times, Galt has ceased to be a popularly read novelist; but now he has become an object of interest for academic work, for instance by Scottish literary historians, and studies of Galt gained a new perspective from their work. (Then too, the bicentenary of Galt's birth significantly increased the extensive and analytic works on Galt.) Recently, a critic said, for *The Last of the Lairds*, that it was good for "academic

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(London: Routledge, 1991), 135.

[178] See for the study of Scottish Enlightenment in the insightful article of John Robertson, "The Scottish Contribution to the Enlightenment," in Paul Wood, ed., *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 37-42, 38.

and special collections" and very useful for students of literature and history.[179] Now he could be tackled with a new vigour, in the context of a national Enlightenment. He was no longer despised as a parochial writer or esteemed from mere patriotic motives; but he was a part of the Scottish Enlightenment. His view of history and his perception of society were examined under this magnifying glass. It was not just single critics who from now on would refer to him as a product of his period; but on Millar's lines he would uniformly be investigated with reference to the Enlightenment studies.

An unfortunate criticism came, however, during the more appreciative period in the sixties from the Marxist critic, David Craig. He attributed merely a superficial perception to Galt, one that did not go beyond an immediate imitation of life and also a one-sided view of the society. Craig placed Galt within the Blackwood's circle. And since he defined the *Maga* as a conservative Tory magazine that published "writings in Scots and…'do' provincial Scotland" he defined Galt as a parochial author writing in a parochial language and politics.[180] In his criticism of *Annals* he observed that,

> because the minister [in the *Annals*] is as conservative and credulous as many of his parishioners, and because everything is felt through his mentality, all other possible life is diminished to his kind of understanding. Galt is "very medium – the imitation of local speech and outlook – is bound to immerse him in ...parochialism.

However, Craig disregarded the fact that Galt himself had problems both with Blackwood's political stubbornness and sometimes with his use of Scots.[181] Both in his parochialism and use of Scots Galt can hardly be counted as a headquarter member of the magazine, though he can be associated with it – joined as in a peripheral orbit.

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[179] Melanie Axel Lute, Review of *The Last of the Lairds or the Life and Opinions of Malachi Mailings*, *Library Journal* 102 (1977): 630.
[180] Craig, *Scottish Literature*, 157-59, 157.
[181] Galt to Blackwood, 27 January, 1821 and 30 January 1821, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS. 4006, ff. 223-

Craig's criticism led to fruitful further thought on the point he raised. Around the same period in England, the literary historian Ian Jack strongly disagreed with Craig and put Galt among the most able writers of the period.[182] Francis Hart elaborated on this in his book *The Scottish Novel*. He agreed with Craig that Galt was to be seen in the context of Blackwoods, but objected to the way Craig defined the Blackwoods. His definition stated that "its [Maga's] nationalism was sometimes authentic, its romanticism Germanic or Coleridgian, its radical Toryism the immediate ancestor of the Fraserians, and Thomas Carlyle." He encircles his argument with the assertion that "Blackwoodian reaction is the manifestation of a Scottish counter-Enlightenment."[183] As stated before Galt was certainly a part of the Blackwood circle but not a constant member; he was one who wrote for it, but also had disagreements with its political stances. Moreover, it may certainly be that the Blackwoods are ill described by the label counter-Enlightenment. The topic would reward investigation.

The second important book of 1779 was Henri Gibault's *John Galt: Romancier Ecossais*. According to Gibault, too, Galt's works reflected the trends of his period. "La civilisation y est surprise dans le mouvement des forces historiques qui l'entraînent; on y perçoit la synthèse organique de l'individu et de son époque, avec autant de netteté que chez Scott et chez Balzac." He pointed out too the necessity of re-evaluating Galt's books and emphasised that such re-evaluation that should not be limited to the most frequently re-published works, but should include the unpublished manuscripts as well. He

24, 220 v., also Blackwood to Galt, Edinburgh University Library [EUL], MS. L. B. 1, Miscellaneous, f. 207.

[182] Jack, *English Literature*, 226. In chapter eight he wrote extensively on Galt.

[183] Francis Russel Hart, *The Scottish Novel: A Critical Survey* (London: J. Murray, 1978), 31.

continued with his own re-evaluation of Galt's value and thought that further effort should be made to establish a wider readership for Galt.[184]

Earlier on in 1976, Keith Costain, also exploring the topic of the Scottish Enlightenment and Galt in relation to realism, concentrated more specifically on the question of theoretical history, a methodological term used by Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, and asked to what extent Galt's works were those of the theoretical historian.[185] According to the theoretical historians, the making of history is not accomplished through the deeds of great men but as an accumulation of activities of the whole society. Conjecture is one of the key methods used which in case of no historical data the historian tries to understand what has happened by his understanding of the human nature. Furthermore, it is not only important to know what happened, but also to understand the underlying meaning of history. Thus a good leader is not the one who instigates reforms, but the one who understands the needs of his society and the stage at which it is — and acts accordingly.

Costain explained that there has been some mentioning of this topic before but not in detail: they had not examined Galt's use of the term "philosophical history" although they had seriously attempted to describe the type of fiction on which his achievements rested.[186] He devoted particular attention to the *Annals*. According to Costain, although

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[184] Gibault*, Romancier Ecossais*, 220-21

[185] K. Costain, "Theoretical History and the Novel: The Scottish Fiction of John Galt," *Journal of English Literary History* 43 (1976): 342, note 6. His other works on Galt are Costain, "The Epistolary Novel and John Galt's The Ayrshire Legatees," in *John Galt: Reappraisals,* ed. E. Waterston (Guelph: Univ. of Guelph, 1985): 72-96; Costain, "The Prince and the Provost," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 6 (1969): 20-35; Costain, "The Rhetoric of Realism: Art and Ideas in the Fiction of John Galt," (Ph. D dissertation, Washington University, 1970); Costain, "The Scottish Fiction of John Galt," *The History of Scottish Literature: Nineteenth Century,* ed. Douglas Gifford (Aberdeen: Aberdeen: Univ. Press, 1988), 107-23; Costain, "The Spirit of the Age and the Scottish Fiction of John Galt," *The Wordsworth Circle* 11 (1980): 98-106.

[186] The critics mentioned are James Kinsley and Ian Gordon; John Galt, "Introduction," *The Annals,* by James Kinsley (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); John Galt, "Introduction," in *The Entail,* by Ian

the theoretical historian can be seen in Galt's other works as well, the *Annals* was his only work which it is fully justifiable to refer to as a theoretical history.[187] He showed various aspects of theoretical history that are apparent in the *Annals* and more specifically in the character of the parish minister, Balwhidder. The choice of a small parish as the setting and its minister as the main character reveals that it is theoretical history writing that is taking place. Furthermore, the belief in a need for balance between social stability and non-rational forces such as supernatural forces or Providence, expressed by Balwhidder, and the late eighteenth-century setting are further clues to Galt's identity as a theoretical historian, Costain maintained. Again, the minister's belief that his parish is a type and index of the rest of the world reveals the idea of an organic social system, where a small locality can be an example of a universality, embraced by the Enlightenment philosophers. Thus, Costain concludes that Galt was right in categorising his book, the *Annals*, as a theoretical history.

An exemplary work is the collection of essays issued for the bicentenary of Galt's birth, edited by C. A. Whatley. This work is still one of the major and most extensive researches into Galt, the Scottish Enlightenment and Scottish society and religion in Galt's period. To a certain extent it answers to the questions raised by Hart and Craig. These essays, however, should be dealt separately rather than together.

Anand Chitnis, in his contribution, continued on Costain's lines and began with the assertion that Galt's subject matter was change in society. He demonstrated how the Scottish philosophers had their influence on Galt's attitudes and work, particularly on his view of history. Moving from the topic of theoretical history, he stated that Galt reflected

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Gordon (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) and see also his more recent work, *John Galt: The Life of a Writer* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1972).

the interaction between social theory and society, which gave the Scottish Enlightenment its distinctive character. His study "seeks to elaborate generally on two social and intellectual themes that Galt mentions in his novels of the 1820s, namely of philosophical history and Moderatism, and to give some consideration to the last years of Enlightenment in Scotland during which Galt wrote."[188]

In addition to the interest in Galt's historical method in an Enlightenment context, his vision of society was another matter of concern, again in the light of Enlightenment theories. Frykman's, as discussed before, and John MacQueen's attention was taken by Galt's social analysis and to what extent he held to eighteenth-century ideas in this matter. MacQueen agreed with Frykman that Galt was generally concerned in line with Scottish Enlightenment figures about the social structure and its nature. In addition they agreed that Galt was interested in the smallest occurrences, but in a way that shows how this small society and occurrence were interlinked with the whole frame.[189] This attempt was part of the social analysis of Scottish Enlightenment figures such as Adam Ferguson.

MacQueen's investigation of Galt's perception of Providence in history was also very insightful.[190] In his analysis of *Ringan Gilhaize*, where the belief in particular Providence is quite apparent, he examined Galt's relationship to Calvinism. *Ringan Gilhaize* is Galt's novel that deals with the Covenanting era. He was inspired to write it, according to his report, after reading Walter Scott's *Old Mortality*. According to Galt,

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[187] Costain, "Theoretical History," 362.
[188] Anand C. Chitnis, "The Scottish Enlightenment in the Age of Galt," in *John Galt 1779-1979*, ed. Christopher A. Whatley (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1979), 33. Likewise, more recently, a literary article dealt with Galt in a Scottish Enlightenment context, Clare Simmons, "John Galt, Scottish Enlightenment, and the Crisis of Genre," *Scottish Literary Journal* 24 (May 1997): 53-76.
[189] John MacQueen, "John Galt and the Analysis of Social History," in *Scott Bicentenary Essays, Selected Papers read at Sir Walter Scott Bicentenary Conference*, ed. Alan Bell (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), 335.
[190] John MacQueen, "*Ringan Gilhaize* and Particular Providence," in *John Galt, 1779-1979*, 107-19.

Scott treated the Covenanters with "too much levity."[191] His conclusion was that Galt's attitude was still a Calvinistic one, but with slight influences derived from the discussion of particular Providence in the eighteenth century. He held that Galt's theological presumptions had in some degree been modified by Newtonian physical science. He asserted that Galt managed to present Ringan as a Predestinarian of a purer theological ancestry. He "believes to obsession that he is singled out by particular Providence to play the role which he completes with the assassination of Claverhouse." This obsession, or the realistic depiction of a Covenanter of a dark and bloody period of Scottish history, denied the book its popularity in its time and long after that.[192]

Lastly there is Whatley's own essay, which like that of Brownlie, examines the *Annals* against recent interpretations of the history of south-western Scotland. As a result he discovered that the dates of some events were shifted by several years and that too many and too various industrial ventures took place around the same parish. His conclusion was that "Galt's conviction about the validity of theoretical history might have led him to distort some of the facts and the historical models of his characters to achieve his philosophic end."[193]

Just a couple of years later, in 1985, another edited work on Galt was published. Elizabeth Waterston edited new themes under scrutiny in her *John Galt: Reappraisals.*[194] The issues dealt with were Galt's views of urbanisation, politics and his narrative perspectives. As it was the publications of papers which were given during a conference in Guelph, Ontario, in June 1984, most contributions dealt with Galt's Canadian works.

[191] *Literary Life,* vol. 1, 254.
[192] MacQueen, "Particular Providence," 108, 113. There is also a part on Galt in the article about religion and daily life, see, Paul Goetsch, "Das Verältnis von Alltag und Religion in der Neueren Englischen Literatur," *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch im Auftrage der Görres-Gesellschaft* 31 (1990): 211-32.

As Elizabeth Waterston also mentioned, it seemed to balance the collection of essays edited by Whatley, in dealing with Galt the politician and urban planner.

To conclude, the existing research or criticisms of Galt were at first dominated by the questioning in his time about what being Scottish was. That is, they were trapped by the duality between gentility, i.e. a progressive British identity, and traditional Scottish culture, i.e. the patriotic notions that have been described by Craig and Hart. In this perspective Galt was approved because he gave a picturesque account of the Scottish society and used its language accurately. On the other hand, he was disapproved of because he was too parochial, using vulgar language and depicting characters so much in contrast with the aspiring gentility.

It would be accurate to say that the defence of and attack on Galt's work – as opposed to analysis of his writings – formed again the critical approach to him in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This time he got into trouble because he was seen as the founding father of the Kailyard movement, characterised by its sentimental-nostalgic strain. But again the long struggle between the still rising English/British values and the desire of national sentiment evoked to hold on to a genuinely owned Scottish culture created demands to re-evaluate Scottish writers from a new perspective. There was an effort to reconcile the new with the old and, in this context, Galt got his share of attention. The attempt were being made to put him in a social and intellectual context, where his influence from Enlightenment topics are underlined.

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[193] Christopher A. Whatley," *Annals of the Parish* and History," in *John Galt 1779-1979*, 51-63.
[194] Elizabeth Waterston, ed., *John Galt: Reappraisals* (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1985).

Re-publications of Galt's books followed and lectures in his name were being given in the twentieth century. Judge mental attitudes to him started to lose ground and gave way to further research. The rise of Scottish studies affected scholarship about Galt. He gained his place among the pre-eminent writers of the early nineteenth century. The events that he described and his picture of society came under close investigation. The result was that Galt was found a substantially accurate writer. The emphasis on Gaelic and Scots increased his prestige as a Scots writer.

The twentieth century was also fruitful in terms of investigation of Galt's character as a philosophical and theoretical writer. The relationship of his works to Enlightenment theories or social trends and, in particular, to historical methods was investigated. Now his works were not subject to a filter of British centralism, but were investigated by a more self-confident, self-searching, Scottish culture. The regionalisation of the Enlightenment, emerging in the 1960s, contributed immensely to the new analysis of the history of Galt's period, both literary and national.

As I have mentioned above, the existing literature on Galt would, in very general terms, place him in the late eighteenth-century intellectual milieu, as part of the Scottish Enlightenment. This has expressed itself in the treatment of two main themes – the genre he adopted, i.e. the historical novel, and his intellectual adaptability. The researchers that stand out in this category here are Millar, Costain, Frykman, Chitnis and, to some extent, MacQueen.[195] Their works tend, firstly, to discuss some of the Scottish Enlightenment figures that had an impact on Galt and then search for their ideas in Galt's works. This categorising of Galt as an eighteenth-century figure highlights his concern with social

[195] See the articles: Chitnis, "Scottish Enlightenment"; Frykman, *Scottish Philosophy*; MacQueen, "Particular Providence," and MacQueen, "Analysis of Social History"; Costain, "Theoretical History."

theory, progressive history, religion and morals. A further consensus in these works is that Galt had an ability to delineate vividly Scottish men and manners in a true domestic environment and that his giving expression to the parochial outlook of the humbler Scottish middle-class makes him distinct in Scottish fiction.[196]

[196] William M. Parker*, Susan Ferrier and John Galt* (London: Longmans, 1965), 28.

CHAPTER 3

THE MAKING, PRIME AND DEATH OF MR. GALT

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but the impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.[197]

John Galt was a man of many contradictions. A writer both neglected and appreciated; he also was a merchant, settlement opener, husband and father. His attitude towards the ideas of his time shifted between admiration for economic progress and intellectual advance, so much a part of Scottish Enlightenment, on the one hand, and appreciation of traditionalism on the other.[198] He always kept the different strands of his life separate, never mixing them together. Although a man with no pretensions to noble birth, he travelled and resided in other countries like many nobles. He was insistent on his man-of-trade career, but he became famous as a literary man. However, his intellectual knowledge was self-taught: he would read on any topic though not in a systematic way, calling himself a "desultory student".[199] Lacking a university education, he was not part of the institutionalised Enlightenment (university, church or law), but he came to the intellectual world through his reading, writing and his acquaintances. Before going on with the particular ideas in his writings it would be helpful to look first at his background,

[197] An ode written for Mary Campbell known as Highland Mary.
[198] David Daiches, The Scottish Enlightenment, 1730-1790: A Hotbed of Genius (Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 1996), 5.
[199] John Galt, *The Autobiography of John Galt*, vol. 1 (London: Cochrane and M'Crone, 1833), 85.

influences and occupations. These will not only put him into a context but will give us an idea of the varieties of genres and trends he was exposed to.

What kind of man was he and what was his character? These questions are not easy to answer, but some of his contemporaries' writings give us some clues. He was definitely a prudent, talkative and forgiving person. More importantly, he was always a good observer, as many of his works reveal.

Handsome in his appearance, he must have been charming too, since women of rank surrounded him. According to a description by his close friend, Dr. Moir, Galt was, even in his forties,

> …of Herculean frame and in the full vigour of health. His height might be about six feet one or two, and he evinced a tendency to corpulency. His hair, which was jet black, had not yet become grizzled; his eyes were small but piercing; his nose almost straight; long upper lip;…finely rounded chin…manly and striking countenance…Mr. Galt's manner was somewhat measured and solemn, yet full of animation, and characterized by a peculiar benignity and sweetness. Except when questioned, he was not particularly communicative; and in mixed company was silent and reserved.[200]

We know from the amusing description by James Hogg, a contemporary Blackwoodian writer, that young Galt was "a thin young man with something dandyish in his appearance"; that he was interested in fashionable appearance already in his early days in Greenock and he must have refined his sense of fashion in London.[201] Hogg remembered that even while he was not attracting particular attention there was still something special in the young Galt. He was an able young man in debates even with people of obstinate and loquacious nature, as well as in humorous conversations. As

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[200] David M. Moir, "Biographical Memoir" of the Author," NLS, Miscellaneous, MS. 9856/35, vii, xxxiv. First published as preface to John Galt, *Annals of the Parish* and *The Ayrshire Legatees* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1841).

[201] James Hogg, "Reminiscences of Some of his Contemporaries," in *The Poetical Works of the Ettrick Shepherd: With an Autobiography* (Glasgow, Edinburgh, London: Blackie and Son, 1878), cxiv. Also see, Hans de Groot, "When Did Hogg Meet John Galt?" *Studies in Hogg and His World* 8 (1997): 75-76.

Hogg recalled, his conversations were an enchanting experience: he could tell old-fashioned stories and recall odd people in an amusing way. Lord Byron himself admitted later that he had made a mistake himself at their first encounter by not recognizing Galt's intellectual and refined abilities. In a snobbish way Byron did not take account of Galt's presence, though he noticed his mildness and equanimity. Byron says:

> Lord Blessington has been talking to me about Mr. Galt and tells me much good of him. I am pleased at finding he is as amiable a man as his recent works prove him to be a clever and intelligent author. When I knew Galt, years ago, I was not in a frame of mind to form an impartial opinion of him…but to say the truth his manner had not deference enough for my then aristocratic taste, and finding I could not awe him into a respect sufficiently profound for my sublime self, either as a peer or an author, I felt [a] little grudge towards him that has now completely worn off. …All that Lord Blessington has been telling me of Galt has made me reflect on the striking difference between his nature and my own. I had an excellent opportunity of judging Galt, being shut up on board ship with him for some days; and sensible I took no pains to cultivate his acquaintance further than I should with any common-place person, which he [Lord Blessington] was not, and all appliances to boot, 'for choosing and selecting', has found so much to like in Galt, malgré the difference of their politics, that his liking has grown into friendship. [202]

Although they were different in rank and fame there was no rivalry or jealousy between them; in fact they became friends later on. As Aberdein remarks, Galt's friendly ease and sincerity brought out the best in Byron.[203] Throughout his life he easily made new acquaintances and associated with people as diverse as Lord and Lady Blessington, Dr Moir and the artist, Mr. Fagan.[204]

[202] Margaret Gardiner, Countess of Blessington, *Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington* (London: Henry Colburn, 1834), 249.
[203] Jennie W. Aberdein, *John Galt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 46.

3.1 The Making of a Character

John Galt was born as the eldest son into a middle-class family on 2 May 1779, in Irvine, Ayrshire.[205] He had one sister and two brothers. His father, John Galt (1750-1817) who was very concerned with his children's education, was a shipmaster and merchant. Irvine, like Greenock where he was going to spend the other half of his youth, had strong mercantile connections for a long time.[206] The first ten years of his childhood Galt spent in Irvine. He received his formal education there. He describes himself as "a soft, ailing and growing child," hampered by ill-health until his early teens. Fortunately, this introduced him to a vast literary culture.[207] He explains that he had to find some indoor amusements, like reading books and gathering all sorts of ballads, storybooks and music. His biographer, Timothy Hamilton, describes him as "a long legit, lackadaisical, lazy, lounging lad, dreaming through the days he should have been at school, often lying on his bed reading, his poor mother puzzled, unsympathetic, not understanding."[208] The only recreation he enjoyed was again out of the ordinary for a boy of his age: it was his garden and his passion for flowers. This discovery of how flowers grew made him "passionately fond of flowers, and [he] derived inexpressible pleasure from their development."[209]

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[204] Autobiography, vol. 1,125-26.
[205] Some of Galt's descendants claim that they are of Danish origin. See Hamilton B. Timothy, *The Galts, A Canadian Odyssey: John Galt 1779-1839* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), 13. Galt himself says in his *Literary Life*, that they came from Perthshire and that they "with some of the Stuarts got hold of the lands of Stuarton, or Stewarton," which is in north Ayrshire, not far from Irvine.
[206] James Paterson, *History of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton,* vol. 3 (Edinburgh: James Stillie, 1866), 252-53.
[207] Autobiography, vol. 1,9.
[208] Timothy W. Hamilton, *John Galt: The Man, His Life and Work*, John Galt Lecture, 1946 (Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works, 1947), 5.
[209] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 4.

As Irvine's importance as a seaport had been in decline for some years, John Galt, the father, decided to move his family to Greenock in 1789.[210] Greenock had culturally a wider variety than Irvine. While Irvine was an outright Lowland burgh, Greenock, as a newly emerging port town with transatlantic trade connections, was attracting a population from various places, especially the Highlands.[211] As it was a port town, sailors and their families made up a great proportion of the town's society along with the merchants and craftsmen. Such variety, without doubt, was going to give a sense of multiplicity and heterogeneity to the children growing up there.

As a result of the Highland clearances and the abolition of heritable jurisdiction, many Highlanders migrated to cities for employment and the rising port town of Greenock offered good opportunities.[212] Greenock both in geographical terms and culturally was very close to the Highlands. It might be surprising, at first glance, how prejudiced Greenock people were towards people from the Highlands. However, as the *Statistical Accounts* descriptions reveal, they were the main Other for the Lowlanders. The Highlanders were foreigners, talking in a foreign language. "One may at times walk from one end of the town to the other, passing many people, and many people passing him, without hearing a word of any language but Gaelic," and "…[l]ike the French and some other nations, they accompany the artificial, with what has been termed *natural language,* significant looks, motions of the hands, and various gesticulations of the

[210] For rapidly growing Greenock see *The Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1799: Lanarkshire and Renfreshire*, ed. John Sinclair, vol. 7 (Wakefield: EP Publishing House, 1973), 693-718 (originally published in 21 volumes in the course of the years 1791-99); Andrew Brown, *History of Glasgow; and of Paisley, Greenock and Port-Glasgow* (Glasgow: William Paton, 1797); Daniel Weir, *History of the Town of Greenock* (Greenock: Daniel Weir, 1829); William Auld, *Greenock and its Early Social Environment* (Greenock: James M'Kelvie & Sons, 1907).
[211] Sinclair, *Statistical Account*, vol. 7, 706.
[212] See for Highlander population in Greenock in Archibald Brown, *The Early Annals of Greenock* (Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works, 1905), 115-21.

body."[213] A century before, the folk memory in Greenock had already formed a not very favourable tale about the Highlanders (or Jacobites, for Jacobite loyalty was very often associated with them). The Jacobite experience had a great impact here. Greenock people had been ardent supporters of the Hanoverians during the uprisings. In their memories Highlanders, such as Rob Roy, were thieves and smugglers. William Auld reports in his book about Greenock that Highlanders were "undesirable aliens" and that Rob Roy and his folk would come down to Greenock Fair "not for the purpose of seeing the shows and the merry-go-rounds, but in order to carry off the cattle, brought there in large numbers for sale."[214] Thus, during the annual Greenock Fair, under the command of Sir John Shaw "men belonging to Greenock…kept watch every night, bringing all the boats from the south side of the Clyde to prevent rebels, especially Rob Roy and his thieves, from transporting themselves across, and plundering adjacent country."[215] Although Greenock people through their interactions must have been growing more tolerant there was still some feeling of collision in the late eighteenth century. The memory of the gathering of men and their marching through the town each year when the Fair started, still continued as an annual procession until 1822. It symbolised the gathering of watch-keepers known as the 'Riding of the Fair'.[216] Most probably, Galt had many such memories about the Highlanders together with the nursery tales of his childhood in his mind.

Greenock also seems to have had a great impact in Galt's perceptions of the Covenanters, whom he described in his novel *Ringan Gilhaize.* Ayrshire was known for its Covenanting spirit, the rigid Presbyterianism of the seventeenth century. As in most of

[213] Sinclair, *Statistical Account,* vol. 7, 717-18.
[214] Auld, *Greenock*, 31.
[215] Letter of Sir John Shaw to the Duke of Argyle, 1715, quoted in Weir, *Town of Greenock*, 38.
[216] Auld, *Greenock,* 32.

western Scotland, Presbyterianism ruled Greenock against any Episcopalian or Catholic conspiracies. Dr. Leyden, a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* and member of the Academy of Physics in Edinburgh, who was also an acquaintance of Galt from Greenock writes: "Greenock had imbedded the most intolerant spirit of Presbyterianism."[217] They went so far in zeal to preserve their Presbyterian values as to restrict poetry reading in school: Mr Wilson, a schoolmaster to Greenock in 1769 was asked to give up his interest in "poem making."[218] Again, in the late eighteenth century this loyalty to Presbyterianism made some townsmen raise funds for Lord George Gordon's anti-Popery campaign. There was political conservatism too: the new minister Alan M'Aulay was sent before the presbytery for being a member of the "Friends of People."[219] The age of Kirk Secessions affected Greenock, too.[220] Towards the end of the eighteenth century there were also the Gaelic chapel and some chapels belonging to the Auld Lichts, like the Burgher Secession. In the 1820s a Baptist meeting-house and an Episcopal chapel were finished against the earlier decision of the superiors of Greenock (most probably the presbytery) that only the churches of true Christian belief, meaning the reformed churches, should establish places of worship in Greenock. In 1829 Weir reported "Greenock may be said to contain almost all sects and persuasions, and the only class of Christians among us, who have no regular place except a hall, are the professors of Universalist doctrines."[221]

After his family's removal thither Galt continued his education in Greenock, where he received for the most part a practical schooling to prepare him for a commercial career. As he himself explains, "owing to my growth and consequent ailment I made

[217] Quoted in Weir, *Town of Greenock*, 24.
[218] Ibid., 24; see also *Autobiography,* vol. 1*,* 55-56.
[219] Auld, *Greenock*, 32 and Weir, *Town of Greenock,* 15.
[220] Weir, Town of Greenock, 24.

comparatively little progress in my education, but I had a very clear idea of what I did learn, and never afterwards forgot it."[222] First, he was sent to a school kept by a certain McGregor. He was apparently a very good teacher but with a harsh temper, as Galt remarks.[223] Afterwards he went to grammar school. Due to Galt's poor Latin he was soon removed from class. G. J. Weir, one of his school friends, described him to Harriet Pigott, a literary lady who was to write a biography of Galt: "he came to Irvine School to learn Latin, but the year having commenced six weeks, precisely, for beginners he was put to a desk by himself to overtake the others. But whether it was a love of play, or the novelty of things or that nature was strongly engaged with his body," (for he was said when only seven years of age, to be as big as a boy of 14) he was not able to do so. This, according to Galt's friend, prevented him from being a scholar.[224] Together with the usual syllabus, major components of Galt's education were geography, mathematics, which included land surveying, and penmanship. Besides these he might have attended one of the Sabbath (Sunday) Evening Schools as well, which then were to be found in every district of the town.

Not surprisingly with this school background, his first job was in Greenock Customs House, to improve his penmanship. In 1796 he became a junior clerk in James Miller and Company where he stayed for eight years. Greenock was his first kitchen where he learned his first intellectual recipes, where he made his most important friendships and learned about the traditions of Lowland Scotland, as well as where he made inquiries about the intellectual theories of his time. In memory of his close friend,

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[221] Ibid., 20; see also Sinclair, *Statistical Account,* vol. 7, 707-08.
[222] Autobiography, vol. 1, 11.
[223] John Galt, *Literary Life and Miscellanies of John Galt*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1834), 4.
[224] G. J. Weir to Harriet Pigott cited in Aberdein, *John Galt*, 9.

William Spence, who died in 1815, he wrote: "the intimacy which grew up from this period…had a strong reciprocal influence on their respective minds."[225]

In his teens, and as a young man, he recovered from his physical weakness and was full of eagerness to learn more about the outside world. Two new friends helped to give him new perspectives and aided childish discoveries, both scientific and literary. His friends inspired and encouraged his imagination. These were James Park and Spence both coming from families of well-to-do Greenock businessmen with high moral and cultural standards.[226] Spence, who was more interested in scientific matters, was the only one among them who lived in Glasgow. He was interested in mathematics. Park, on the other hand, was endowed with a judicious power of appreciation and an ability to analyse literature critically. With Spence and Park and his other friends he could exchange books, widen his interests, invent instruments, and create plans for canals to solve the water problem of the city.

In his *Autobiography,* Galt admits that he had a strong attachment to Park and praises him greatly. Galt wrote that he did not meet any more accomplished person than Park, including Lord Byron. "He read several languages perfectly, — his poems often approximated to genius, and his prose compositions, if they were not eloquent and original, were highly elegant and sometimes beautiful. Perhaps, had he not been long the victim of infirm health he might have merited admiration; as it is, I cannot think of him but as one of the most amiable persons I ever met with in life."[227] With Park, Galt could discuss literary endeavours and through him Galt developed an interest in classical and traditional literature: they developed their aesthetic-analytic faculties together. On the

[225] John Galt, "The Late Mr. William Spence," *The Monthly Magazine* 47 (May 1819): 374.
[226] Hamilton, *John Galt*, 9.

other hand, Spence helped him to develop his scientific-descriptive side. Besides their boyish experiments of various kinds, the classics were read and a more solid and mature course of study undertaken in history and biography. They shared readings in classics, antiquarian books, Richardson, and Scottish literature like Burns, Mackenzie and other fashionable authors of their period.

One of the fashionable topics that was occupying intellectuals of the late eighteenth century was sensibility, a literary trend. Eighteenth-century sensibility can be seen as a direct outcome of Enlightenment themes by which the humanitarianism of the eighteenth century merged in a movement of morality and feelings, especially after the French Revolution.[228] With philosophers like Shaftesbury and Hume and, later on, with the romantics, the individual experience of feeling came to be seen as a scheme for the basis of a progressive civil society, religious faith and aesthetic judgement. The literature of sensibility was widely read in the second half of the eighteenth century. It awakened an interest in the individual within society, in morality and looked back to the middle ages and the Celtic past with its cult of original genius and the search for the "national primitive."[229] Like most in his age Galt and his friends were eager to read this literature and were influenced by both aspects of sensibility, namely by the nostalgic/historic one and the progressive impulse.

His unceasing curiosity was set ablaze by his trips. Together with Park and Agnew Crauford, another companion, he frequently made excursions to Edinburgh or Loch Lomond that sometimes lasted for weeks. Even before his trips with his friends, the

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[227] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 24.
[228] See for more chapter 3 below.
[229] Chris Jones, *Radical Sensibility: Literature and Ideas in the 1790s* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), viii, 1.

Galt children had been used to traveling in their early youth, visiting their grandmother in Greenock or visiting relatives in Kilmarnock. The trips led through old Glasgow, passing interesting historical places like Largs or the ruins of Castle Southenan. To a child like Galt, these proved to be incidents influential and memorable in his life. Later on reading Pinkerton's "Essay on the Goths" he picked up these memories to write the poem "The Battle of Largs."[230]

Young Galt experienced and learned through other particular characteristics of his hometown. He absorbed a solid western Lowland culture through his closeness to the older people who were close to him. "To hear their tales and legends" fascinated him and he used their stories later on in his works.[231] They were eyewitnesses of the past, providing Galt with a bridge between the past and the present. It was history told first-hand: they told him of their own times, histories as they were remembered, fresh from the "stove of memory." One of those narrators, remembered by Galt later on, was the mother of Lieutenant Gueliland who had been a flag officer at the Battle of Trafalgar. She used to tell Galt all about her own times. In his words, he "enjoyed strange pleasure in the narratives of her life and privations."[232] Thus, some of the enduring ideas he acquired in his youth came from an oral tradition. It certainly helped him to see that there might be many histories of the same event or period that differed according to the perceptions of those relating the history. In later years, he often referred to his possession of "local memory" (to which Aberdein refers as the visual memory),[233] which was a remembered experience that, although it did not have any importance at the time and was listened to

[230] Moir, "Biographical Memoir," vii.
[231] Galt to W. Blackwood, 1820, London, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4005, ff. 102-03.
[232] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 9-11.
[233] Aberdein, *John Galt*, 7.

just as the heroic stories of Hercules, helped to give him his later power to work, analyse and create. A description of Andrew Wylie's boyhood from Galt's novel *Sir Andrew Wylie of that Ilk* that might be speaking of the author in his youth:

> Distinguished from all the lads of his own age, for the preference which he gave to the knacky conversation of old and original characters. It signified not to him whether the parties with whom he enjoyed his leisure were deemed douce or daft; it was enough that their talk was cast in queer phrases, and their minds ran among the odds and ends of things. By this peculiar humour, he was preserved in his clachan simplicity; while he made…his memory like a wisdom-pock, a fouth of auld knick-knacketies – clues of experience, and shapings of matter, that might serve to clout the rents in the knees and elbows o'straits and difficulties.[234]

Later on he started to realize how important his old memories were for him. One of these local memories had had a very profound influence on him. This embedded visually a difference between Presbyterian orthodoxy and heterodoxy. It concerned the Buchanites, an apocalyptically minded religious sect. They had attracted great attention with Mrs Buchan claiming "to be the woman spoken of in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, and that Mr. Whyte (the Relief minister called to assist at the sacrament) was the manchild she had brought forth."[235] Their theological eccentricities created such a stir that in May 1784 the magistrates forced them to leave the town. As they were marching on their way to New Jerusalem (as they claimed), Galt found himself carried away by their enthusiasm. He commented, "I have not the slightest recollection of Mrs. Buchan's heresies – how could I? – but the scene and more than once the enthusiasm of the psalm singing has risen on my remembrance."[236] Before he found out where this curious trip was leading him, his mother intervened and "shaking his idle heterodoxy out of him, she

[234] John Galt, *Sir Andrew Wylie of that Ilk* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1936), chapter 8, 48.
[235] John Sinclair, *Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799*, vol. 6 (Wakefield: EP Publishing Limited, 1982), 252-53.

reclaimed him, to be brought up in the common-sense Presbyterianism of the domestic hearth."[237]

In 1792 Spence had returned from spending a couple of years in Glasgow with Mr Struthers, where he had acquired not only a knowledge of mathematics far beyond that available in Greenock but had also become acquainted with the philosophy of various subjects. Park and Galt developed an interest in clothes and gentlemanly attitudes. Hogg described Galt being:

> dressed in frock-coat and new top-boots; and it being then the fashion to wear the shirt collars as high as the eyes, Galt wore his the whole night with the one side considerably above his ear, and the other flapped over the collar of his frock-coat down to his shoulder. He had another peculiarity, which appeared to me a singular instance of perversity. He walked with his spectacles on and conversed with them on, but when he read he took them off. [238]

Spence had become different, too: he did not pay attention to his own clothing; and he became sententious, developed his philosopher like attitude and preserved his mystical pre-eminence in his society.[239] The other two friends, however, having stayed at home, felt themselves to be inferior to him in conversation. Spence's return must have initiated talk about philosophy and Spence must have supplied them with more academic topics in philosophy and science. He was a domineering and teacher like figure within their Greenock circle and he must have been like a fresh breath, coming up with new ideas. Rightly Moir remarked that this helped "not only in stimulating to research, but in developing intellectual powers which might otherwise have remained latent."[240]

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[236] *Autobiography,* vol. 1, 5-7.
[237] Moir, "Biographical Memoir," ii.
[238] Hogg, "Reminiscences," cxv.
[239] Galt, "William Spence:" 376; *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 46.
[240] Moir, "Biographical Memoir," viii.

Greenock was hardly a hotbed for intellectuals. As Ian Gordon remarked, it was not polite Edinburgh, but as a growing trading city of the time, it respected development and encouraged young men of energy in their social endeavors.[241] The years of Galt's youth were the golden years of the city. The port and with it trade created a circulation of ideas; there were several clubs, a theatre and a coffee house. Again, most of the local literary and philosophical societies (most of which had but a short existence) were established during the 1790s.[242]

Galt was an ardent member of the Greenock Subscription Library. It was instituted in 1783 by some gentlemen in the town and soon collected some 200 volumes, which in *Statistical Accounts* were reported as "for the most part very well selected."[243] Galt was not just an ordinary member of the society but actively participated in any decision making. During these years the administration of the subscription library decided to ban and lock away certain books. Among these books was Godwin's *Political Justice*. Galt was one of the leaders of a liberal group which rejected this decision. Although he himself found Godwin wrong but difficult to refute, his party rejected censorship and it was eventually successful in taking over the committee of the library and returning the book to use. From his very early youth onwards he was a self-confessed "voracious reader" – and, just as later on he would resist any censorship of his own writings, he was against any sort of intervention directed against anyone's written work.

He had access to a great variety of books when he was in Greenock. Local history and antiquarian books like Pinkerton (a very famous antiquarian of the time) on the Goths; literature of English, Irish and Scottish writers such as Addison, Mackenzie,

[241] Ian Gordon, *John Galt, the Life of a Writer* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1972), 109.
[242] For these societies, see Weir, *Town of* Greenock, 81-82.

More, Chatterton, Ferrier, Milton and Swift were available. Besides these literary pursuits he had also access to political, philosophical and historical works. He could read Bacon, Burke, Gibbon, Knox, Gilbert Stuart, Reid, Hume, Robertson, Fergusson and Walpole. The collection of books was not restricted to Scottish and English authors: non-English ones like D'Alembert, Montaigne, Montague, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Sevigné and Machiavelli were included. Periodicals like the *Lounger* and the *Mirror*, as in any other library, were present besides the *Edinburgh Magazine*, the *Monthly Magazine*, the *Monthly Review*, the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Annual Review*. Park and Galt's name were still on the list of library subscribers in 1808 and 1812, after Galt had left for London.[244]

Galt also was actively involved as a member of the Loyal Greenock Society, the Society for Encouraging Arts and Sciences, the local Literary Society and, later on, the Debating Society. Spence was also the one who proposed to his friends the establishing of an organisation for exchanging thoughts, namely a debating society.[245] The Debating Society met once a month during the 1790s and essays were read and discussed. Galt found himself quite inferior to both Spence and Park during that period. Spence already had essays on astronomical issues: "they were all about planets and comets, the cosmogony of the earth, the infinite divisibility of matter, and the boundless nature of premundane space." Park, on the other hand, offered moral essays where he "inculcated propriety and prudence as virtues above all laud."[246] Galt asserted that howsoever the

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[243] Sinclair, *Statistical Accounts*, vol. 7, 717.
[244] It is possible to see the catalogues of the years 1787, 1792, 1807 and 1808 of the subscription library at the James Watt Library, Greenock. Though a small but select collection in 1787, the number and range of the books increases extensively in the year 1808. See appendix 2.
[245] Galt, "William Spence:" 373.
[246] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 45, 46.

essays might have been, the society had a great impact on the development, "if not the formation of the minds of the members." Eventually Galt started to write for magazines too. During these years Galt and Park were contributors to the *Greenock Advertiser* and sometimes even to the *Scots Magazine* with essays, poems and stories. One of those was the epic "The Battle of Largs" of which portions were published in the *Scots Magazine* for 1803 and 1804.

Soon Galt's writing skill received more and more appreciation. He started to publish essays and poems in *Constable's Magazine* (a local magazine and therefore seen by Galt as part of his patriotism) and was there received as a good writer. One incident, however, assured him of his skill. At that time Dr. Leyden was about to publish a new edition of John Wilson's famous poem the *Clyde* with a memoir of the author. His daughter, who was an acquaintance of Galt, asked him for anecdotes and help. After the memoir was sent, Dr. Leyden, the editor of *Constable's,* wrote a letter full of praise about Galt's accomplishment and the biography he wrote was published with very few changes. It certainly gave him courage to pursue his writing. Long after he wrote that these were years when he put too much emphasis on literature, "believing that literature was the first of human pursuits."[247]

As years went on, his taste in reading seemed to grow as well as his skill. The major guide in his reading and study seems still to have been Park. This path led him towards drama between the years 1796 and 1800. This was a period when theatre going became one of the preferred entertainments in Scotland. He continuously read plays and paid visits to the theatre at Greenock and Glasgow.[248] Interestingly, unlike his

[247] *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 29.
[248] Weir, *Town of* Greenock, 37.

contemporaries, Galt was not very much influenced by German literature. Schiller made an impression on him with his *Robbers* and Goethe with *Werther,* but beside these he "was never very strongly excited by any production of the German School."[249] He liked Mackenzie, but the sensibility of German writers, or perhaps their romanticism, was too intense for his more realist taste, although he was fascinated by the gothic romance *The Mysteries of Udolpho*: "it is now more than thirty years since I saw the book and yet at times the remembrance comes upon me like the lamplight shadow of some phantasm in an 'eerie' fit." This work created in him a curiosity about the Italian language, which at the time was known only by Spence in Greenock. In London, later on, he renewed his study of it and "during the time I was abroad, I could speak it and write it with some fluency." He became interested also in the Scots language, but not in Gaelic. Park started to learn Gaelic, on which Galt only commented: 'there is certainly no accounting for tastes."

It was now the beginning of a new century. Scotland was experiencing some changes in social structure and undergoing a rapid urbanization. In the middle of George III's reign Britain was still a rural society, but was moving now, remarkably quickly, towards urbanisation. In Scotland some experimental industrial areas were erected, like New Lanark. A new urban culture was developing, whereas the rural, village values began to diminish. This rapid growth was capable of confirming the Enlightenment belief in progress and improvement. For some it was an indication that society was heading towards a better civilization, whereas others became more pessimistic about the future by the ill effects of urbanisation. Without doubt this was an igniting experience for many Scottish Enlightenment thinkers who made a major contribution to an increasing interest

[249] *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 24, 25.

in change, society and development. The towns and the region around Glasgow and Edinburgh were amongst those that underwent the greatest change, both in social structure and intellectual atmosphere, with ever more people flocking to the cities. As Dr Pringle wrote excitedly in *The Ayrshire Legatees*:

> At Greenock I saw nothing but shipping and building; at Glasgow, streets spreading as if they were one of the branches of cotton-spinning; and here [Edinburgh] the houses frown up as if they were sown in the seed-time with the corn drill machine, or dibbled in rigs and furrows like beans and potatoes.[250]

In such an age Galt started to feel restricted in Greenock — not only in terms of cultural development. He was also concerned for his commercial career.

Galt decided that he should leave Greenock and search for his fortune elsewhere. Without knowing that the journey to London would be not just physical but also spiritual, he headed south in May 1804. Arriving in London with "a whole mail of introductory letters," he soon realised that it did not awaken the interest that he had expected. As the painter David Wilkie, whom he admired and with whom he later made acquaintance, recounted, such letters only initiated invitations to dinners. In the same way, Galt described them as mere "dinner tickets."[251] As time passed he started to visit art galleries, attend theatrical performances and dinners where he met interesting people with reputation, fortune and power like the Blessingtons. Lord and Lady Blessington were, besides the Lords political character, eminent in artistic and literary circles in London and had a good reputation for their French salon type of gatherings and there was Benjamin

[250] John Galt, "Letter III," *Ayrshire Legatees: or the Pringle Family* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, James Thin, 1978), 7.

[251] David Wilkie came to London at the age of 20. John Jackson described his contemporary in a letter as a talented painter, "a raw, tall, pale, queer, Scotch man." Quoted in Aberdein, *John Galt,* 31. His paintings gained great fame and he was accepted for the Royal Academy and later on became a royal painter to Queen Victoria. Galt and Wilkie, although not meeting much, were influenced by each others work, See

West, the artist. However, Galt soon found out that while London could offer much cultural and intellectual entertainment, it provided him with little by way of business in the short run. Young Pringles' explanations about London in his letters in the *Ayrshire Legatees* perhaps reflect Galt's own early memories of London.

Between 1804 and 1809, he was waiting for some suitable commercial opening, which did not come easily and when it arrived did not prove very profitable. During this period, he devoted himself to cultural and intellectual activities. It was a time to "rub off the rough edges of his provincialism."[252] This was what Hume and other Scottish intellectuals had experienced when they went to London. The first encounter provoked a need for becoming alike or keeping pace with developments. He had plenty of time, outside recreational activities, to read in the British Museum and to write verses and letters to his friends. Most of his correspondence was with his old friend Park. Soon these letters became tools for soothing feelings of loneliness and yearnings for old friends and his accustomed environment.

Was he really suited to this life in London? Was he perhaps overestimating his abilities and his courage? How long was he going to put up with this loneliness? Park was the one who rushed to his aid. In one of his letters he reminded him to "check all dispositions to grow romantic, and endeavour to get rich as soon as possible by all honourable means." Furthermore, Park also encouraged him to write and he implied that London was doing him only good. "Your improvement is apparent even in your letters, and I had designed to mention it to you even if you had not yourself introduced the

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Gordon, *John Galt,* 11.
[252] Aberdein, *John Galt,* 32.

subject."[253] These comments, or perhaps just friendly encouragements, were not ineffective: Galt's studies were exemplary in the sense that he became more and more proficient in literature and also developed a greater understanding in mercantile topics.

His reading was now of a more systematic nature. He reported that it was "extensive and various; chiefly, however, among books of knowledge rather than these of imagination." For example, his study of the *Lex Mercatoria* and histories of trade was, as for many other Enlightenment thinkers, a means to comprehend progress in western civilisation. He went on to read legal cases, other existing laws and the decisions of tribunals. He failed to recognise this as a period of self-transformation at the time, but in his *Autobiography* he divulged "from…my departure from Greenock, there must have been some visible modification of character about me." He started to become more decisive, rather than a man of precipitate behaviour with an intense earnestness, which looked like "absence of mind." Slowly he started to compose himself, but the damage had already been done and he was heading towards a nervous illness.

His interest meantime spread to new topics, produced by both reading and his new acquaintances. He developed an interest in astrology, history and philosophy. In 1805 Spence and Park paid a visit to London. Together they went to Blenheim and Oxford, which instigated Galt's interest in Cardinal Wolsey. Years later he was to publish a life of the cardinal. James Hamilton, who was a businessman who had great interest in family history and heraldry and was besides an antiquarian, introduced him to these new topics.

[253] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 70. Unfortunately Galt flung the parcel of his letters to Park into the fire when, after Park's death, his brother delivered them to Galt. Thus we do not know what he was writing during this important period in London. It was a period of discoveries for Galt about the world and himself as well. He himself says "I was then an aspiring young man, the world was all before me." Ibid., 71.

From Hamilton he gained a competent knowledge of Scottish families, their descendants and connexions.[254]

Alexander Tilloch was one of his new acquaintances. A graduate of the University of Glasgow, now in London, he was a part proprietor of the *Star* newspaper and editor of the *Philosophical Magazine*. His interests in literature and science were wide and he was referred to as "widely and deeply read, a student, scholar, and inventor."[255] Galt, probably influenced by Greenock's commercial and collonial connections, started to contribute to the *Philosophical Magazine* in 1805 with an essay on "Commercial Policy" and continued to write on Canadian issues. Tilloch lent him many rare and curious books and encouraged Galt's project to write a *Life of Wolsey*, of which the first draft was finished in 1809. Through his support, Galt went to Jesus College, Oxford, and gained access to the library and its manuscripts. After just a few years they became relatives, by Galt's marriage to Tilloch's daughter.

Besides his literary activities, Galt was still looking for convenient commercial opportunities. He took his first chance by doing business with a young Port Glasgow man, called McLachlan, in 1805. It seems that Captain Galt supported his son in this venture. In a short time, however, Galt discovered that McLachlan was already in debt. Although Galt lost his confidence in him and did not speak to him for a year, except on business matters, the partnership continued for three years. Then in 1808, another misfortune befell them as a correspondent of theirs was declared bankruptcy and this brought them down too.

[254] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 54, 85, 72, 86-87, 86.
[255] Aberdein, *John Galt*, 39.

His next business venture was, at his father's insistence, with his brother Tom. Galt was not at all eager to get involved in trade again. He says: "I was induced, much against my own will and opinion, to renew the mercantile profession."[256] Shortly after, Tom was offered a job in Honduras, which he immediately took. In the meantime, Galt's health started to decline rapidly and he went to Bath to recover. During his stay there he started to think about what he should do next. As Ian Gordon said: "Galt was twenty-nine and his taste for the world of commerce was blunted by failure."[257] The mercantile profession seemed not to have been the best option for him at that time and he decided to enter Lincoln's Inn to study law.

Once this decision was taken, he started to establish a decent law library. Partly because he still suffered from his nervous complaint, as he described it, and also because he wanted to pass the time before being called to the bar, he decided to go abroad. He wanted to shake off "the crisis of life," as he called this period. It was a difficult period and looking back in his old age he commented: "I would be justified indeed in stating that it was bitter," but:

> It could not, however, be disguised from myself that I was about to be born into the scene of a new world, in which there was no reason to expect that my chequered destiny would be changed. But there was at the time a consoling advantage in my prospects; a young man ignorant of the world, who thought himself fit for anything he was likely to undertake, was not easily daunted.

There were other things that he could do: for example, he had an aptitude for the role of a professional lobbyist, which would become one of the most important careers in his life. His skill was noted in connection with an affair of Archibald Thomson, an engineer and inventor who had a problem of agreement with his employee on the patent

[256] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 99-105, 112.

for his work. He was advised by a common friend to ask Galt, who had helped him before, to prepare a statement about the issue.[258] Though not very professionally prepared, the statement worked for Archibald and probably this was also a small step towards making Galt's name heard in parliamentary circles.

However, now before anything else, he decided to go on a tour in the Mediterranean. So he says: "I bade adieu to England, half desiring that no event might occur to make me ever wish to return, and yet for this morbid feeling I had no cause." He visited Gibraltar, Sicily, Malta, Sardinia, Greece and most of the Mediterranean islands, stopping at Palermo, the Morea, Smyrna, Ephesus, Patros, Xanthium, Vestitza, Corinth and Argos. It was a trip that made a serious impact upon him. It was a world that he had only read about in books previously. However, seeing it in reality was, as he soon discovered, very different.

Sometimes he was taken away by the scenery and sometimes he was puzzled by the different identities of places and people. Much as he wanted to get a general idea of a certain region or people, he was also careful not to over-generalize his impressions. He was always ready to give instances which contradicted each other and thus check generalizations about identities. He met, for example, two Turkish men in different instances, noting that one was hostile, the other one ready to help.[259] He started to develop an ability to distinguish different cultures and appreciate their distinctive characteristics. At the same time he also started to realize that the past and the present did not have to be on a straight line of development. The origins of his defence of the present against the past and his thoughts about contrasting it with the past, as Keith Costain, a

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[257] Gordon, *John Galt*, 9.
[258] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 113, 80-83.

modern literary historian, puts it, emerged in these days: the present always, he held, counts more than the past.[260] Some of the older existing civilizations might shrink in time. For instance, the long appreciated classical civilization of Greece proved to be a disappointment. Only in Aegina was he pleased to see that Greeks demonstrated a continuity with their precious past. It appeared that only there the Greeks were worthy inheritors of their great name. It was important for him that a nation should be laudable because of their present situation, not that they had great fame because they had had a great past. "Greece has been so long ruined, that even her desolation is in a state of decay."[261] In contrast to Aberdein's remark that these trips had no impact on Galt,[262] it is to be said that these new experiences of different cultures and societies, later on, did have an impact on Galt's grasp of culture and history. As a matter of fact, he began to perceive change as an inevitable phenomenon in a society and culture, but insisted always on referring to the history of that society. In that sense it is perhaps for the first time that he saw that there was a cumulative history, that is, that the past is important to the degree that it makes a difference today. Living in nostalgia and boasting of the past is not important. History should have a progressive impact on a nation and must show itself in its contemporary state.

The tour was a test of cosmopolitanism and also of some of the social theories of the Enlightenment. The Ottoman lands seem to have had an impact on his thoughts. Many cultures, people speaking different languages and with different religious beliefs

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[259] Ibid., 115, 146, 139, 141.
[260] Keith Costain, "The Spirit of the Age and the Scottish Fiction of John Galt," *The Wordsworth Circle* 11 (1980): 98.
[261] John Galt, Letters from the Levant: Containing Views of the State of Society, Manners, Opinions, and Commerce in Greece and Several of the Principal Islands of the Archipelago (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1813), 9-10.
[262] Aberdein, *John Galt,* 42-62.

had been brought together under the same government. As remarked above, he came to be interested in the identities of different nations. Especially striking seemed to be the difference between the Turks and the Albanians. He was impressed by the Albanian soldiers' simplicity of character. Their dress reminded him of Highlanders.[263] With regard to the Turks, on the other hand, he talks more about the authorities who were extravagant in offering hospitality and protection to him all the time, which he attributed to his being British and the Ottomans interest in having good relations with Britain. In Tripoli he met a certain Veli Pasha, to whom he was presented with a letter. He was surprised to find himself treated with the utmost courtesy; he was entertained with a feast, conversation and music and the pasha did his best to facilitate his journey. He was always anxious to find the peculiarities of particular regions, about professions and administration and even land tenure. He described the peasants and land tenure system in the Ottoman Empire, giving differences between various places. He made a great effort to learn about the land tenure and people's life styles and traditions.[264]

He also did not squander opportunities to study in different libraries. In Palermo he met Mr Fagen, an artist, who helped him to use the Jesuit Library. As he still intended to write a biography of Wolsey, he started to accumulate sources for his research; but this library was of special importance since it shed light on the Catholic point of view, which had not previously been considered much in England.[265] In Gibraltar he met others. There was Colonel Wright, secretary to the governor, and through him the Countess of Westmoreland. More importantly he met Lord Byron, and although they did not become

[263] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 139.
[264] John Galt, "Letters from the Levant," *A Tour in Asia, Comprising the Most Popular Modern Voyages and Travels* (London: J. Souter, n. d.), 341-42.
[265] *Literary Life*, Vol. 1, 77-78, 93-94.

intimate friends immediately, they developed a friendship afterwards and Galt wrote a biography of him after his death.[266]

His commercial interest never ceased. During his Mediterranean trip it occurred to him that he could break Napoleon's commercial embargo, imposed by the Berlin Decrees, by smuggling in goods to the continent through the Ottoman Empire.[267] He visited Ottoman lands in the winter and the Ottomans were now at war with Russia. He first tried to find a way to start the business by himself, but it turned out not to be possible and he only pursued the matter further when he returned to Scotland. After some research, he found out that a company, Messrs. Kirkman Finlay & Co., was interested and had been thinking about it too. They were a notable merchant firm in Glasgow and soon he contacted them. The firm was thinking of opening a branch in Gibraltar and Galt was offered a position in June 1812. He was to report to a Glasgow merchant the feasibility of smuggling British goods into Spain and set himself to learn Spanish.[268] It was during this period, he remarked later on in his *Literary Life*, that he sensed a change in himself.

> [T]he great transmutation of which I was sensible, was in my own hopes. I remembered well how buoyant, even fantastical, they once had been, how luxuriant and blossomy; but I saw that a blight had settled on them, and that my career must in future be circumscribed and very sober.[269]

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[266] Andrea, Cozza, "Il Byron di John Galt," *English Miscellany: A Symposium of History, Literature and the Arts* 22 (1971): 215-41; Waterston, Elizabeth. "Beginning a 'Life': Opening Movement in Scott's Napoleon and Galt's Byron." *Scottish Literary Journal: A Review of Studies in Scottish Language and Literature* 7 (1980): 41-50.

[267] Although Galt said that he wanted to go to a journey to improve his health Douglas remarked that there were biographers who "united in representing [the scheme of introducing goods to Continent through Turkey] as the object of his going abroad. George Douglas, '*The Blackwood' Group* (Edinburgh, London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1897), 56.

[268] William Roughead, *The Fatal Countess and Other Studies* (Edinburgh: W. Green and Son, 1924), 266.

[269] *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 139-40.

Arriving in Gibraltar and not having much to do he filled his time again with reading and writing, and learning Spanish.[270] However, news arrived that Lord Wellington was on campaign against the French in Spain, capturing Madrid on 12 August 1812. Wellington not only defeated the French but Galt's commercial hopes as well. Galt, not being in very good in health, stayed for a couple of months in Gibraltar and in the spring of 1813 went back to London where he visited Dr. Lynn for surgical treatment.[271] "He considered his taking this step as in some degree humiliating, and for some time he hesitated; but the love of life at length assumed the ascendancy."[272]

Though very ill on his arrival in London, it offered him a new beginning full of energy and hope. He was trying to convince the influential publisher Constable to accept a story (the first version of *Annals*)[273] and offered contributions to the *Edinburgh Review* which were turned down.[274] He started to edit his letters and notes, which were inspired and written during his stays abroad. These were published as the *Letters from the Levant* and *Voyages and Travels* (1812), to which later on stories such as *The Majolo* (1816) and *The Earthquake* (1820) were added. Then, as soon as he returned, he set on with his research to finish Cardinal Wolsey's biography, which met with some success upon its

[270] Moir, "Biographical Memoir," xviii.
[271] Aberdein, *John Galt*, 77.
[272] Moir, "Biographical Memoir," xviii.
[273] It was only going to be published after Scott had published his Scottish tales. Galt to Blackwood, London, 30 January 1821, London, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS. 4006, f. 219.
[274] Eric Frykman, *John Galt's Scottish Stories 1820-1823* (Uppsala: A.-B Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1959), 31. See letters Galt to Constable, 1819, NLS, Miscellaneous Letters, MS. 682, ff. 78, 80, 82, 84, 87 about *Annals* and about *Edinburgh Review,* NLS, Miscellaneous Letters, MS. 682, ff. 72 and 74.

publication (1812).[275] Galt's publications began from 1812 onwards, and including books for both general and even juvenile readers.[276]

3.2 Prime

After this return to London he married Elizabeth Tilloch at the age of 33. As Katherine Thomson described her in *Recollections of Literary Characters* she was a humble, religious and self-distrustful figure.[277] Now that he had started a family, there were three different compartments in his life: business, literary, and family life.

In 1814 he considered moving to France and visited it, in the hope of finding commercial means to continue his career in trade. With this view, he inspected the cotton factories of Rouen; then went further to Brussels and to Holland; and shortly after returned to England finding no prospects there.[278] In 1817 his father became ill and shortly after died.[279] After working briefly as the secretary of the Royal Caledonian Asylum[280] in London, he returned to Scotland in 1819. He moved with his family to Finnart, a small village in the neighbourhood of Greenock. However, after a short stay he returned to London, since the Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal Company had

[275] He depicted Cardinal Wolsey as a self-made man. The biography was highly praised by Walter Scott, who upon reading it, wrote Galt, a letter full of commendation.
[276] Cursory Reflections on Political and Commercial Topics, 1812; The Life and Administration of Cardinal Wolsey, 1812; The Tragedies of Maddelen, Agememnon, Lady Macbeth, Antonia and Clytemnestra, 1812; Letters from the Levant, 1813; The Life and Studies of Benjamin West, 1816; The Majolo, 2 vols., 1816; The Appeal, 1818.
[277] Quoted in Timothy and Baird, *Canadian Odyssey,* 47.
[278] Moir, "Biographical Memoir," xviii-xix. See also Roughead, *Studies*, 266.
[279] Galt to Constable, 1817, NLS, Miscellaneous Letters, MS 682, f. 76.
[280] He became the secretary of the Highland Society of London which was instituted for educating and supporting the children of soldiers and sailors who were Scottish together with the Scottish infant poor in London. This has been initially founded in commemoration of the Egyptian campaign. See Galt to Scott,

commissioned him to superintend a bill through the House of Commons. One of his duties was to promote their bill in parliament, which would allow them to raise money for the scheme. He was involved in a difficult and corrupt lobbying process, which surely characterised most of the politics in the British parliament.[281] The job as a lobbyist, together with his literary pursuits, were to be his main occupations until his death. His literary career began to flourish: William Blackwood had discovered him and one of the most fruitful decades in his life started.

In 1819 he began to submit some work to Blackwood's Magazine. The first five years of the 1820s were his most successful as a writer.[282] After the *Annals* and *Legatees* he considered entitling his series of works "Tales of the West" but this was rejected by Blackwood because it "would smell something of imitation," echoing to Walter Scott's "Tales of my Landlord."[283] It is obvious that he was initially writing for a Scottish audience. Edinburgh had become one of the more convenient cities for printing and publishing because of its prices, even for London publishers.[284] In this atmosphere new journals and newspapers started to flourish as well. The dominant one was the Whig *Edinburgh Review*, that first appeared in October 1802.[285] The *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (*Maga*) was published in order to break this long Whig dominance by the

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NLS, Scott Papers, MS 3885, ff. 251-51v.

[281] Whatley, "Introduction," in *John Galt 1779-1979*, 11.

[282] The Earthquake, 3 vols. 1820; Glenfell, 1820, The Life, Studies and Works of Benjamin West, 1820; Annals of the Parish, 1821; The Ayrshire Legatees, 1821; Sir Andrew Wylie 3 vols. 1822; The Provost, 1822; The Steamboat, 1822; The Entail, 3 vols., 1823; The Gathering of the West, 1823; Ringan Gilhaize, 3 vols., 1823; The Speawife, 3 vols., 1823; The Bachelors Wife, 1824; The Omen, 1825; The Last of the Lairds, 1826. (This last novel was edited and revised by D. M Moir after Galt left for Canada. For details see Ian Gordon, "Plastic Surgery on a Nineteenth-Century Novel," The Library: A Quarterly Journal of Bibliography 32 (1977): 246-55.

[283] Galt to Blackwood, 28 February 1821, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MSS. 4006, f. 225 and Blackwood to Galt, 25 April 1821, Edinburgh, EUL, Galt Letters, LB 2, f. 8.

[284] A.S. Collins, The Profession of Letters: a Study of the Relation of Author to Patron Publishers and Public, 1780-1832 (London: Routledge and Sons, 1928), 130-31.

[285] See John Clive, *Scotch Reviewers: The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1815* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd.,

Edinburgh Review. The *Edinburgh Review* had, for a long time, contributed to the literary life of Edinburgh, intending to offer an alternative point of view. However, it showed signs of becoming a tyranny, declining to print different opinions itself.[286] The *Maga* became notable as soon as it came out, on account of the quality of its articles. "They were in a bold unflinching manner," as James Grant described them, in their assertion of the conservative cause in politics.[287] Gillies, a writer and critic of the times, commented that the *Maga* had attained great fame and readers contributions from all quarters to enliven its appearance.[288] Much of the lively background to literature and the bitterness during the early nineteenth century arose from the association of literature and politics; for most of the writers of the Scottish literary scene were involved with one or the other of the two magazines.[289]

Galt's relations with Blackwood were of a friendly nature.[290] Blackwood had found a writer who promised to be another Scott for him. The *Annals of the Parish* was an immediate success and sold 500 copies in London and that just in three or four days. In Edinburgh the initial sale was 400. "I have seldom published a more popular or valuable book" Blackwood was to remark.[291] It was not only read widely but was a source of inspiration for others. It inspirited the artist Wilkie to paint a Scottish scene. John Stuart Mill, looking for a name for the society he wanted to instigate, found the

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1956).
[286] Douglas, '*Blackwood' Group*, 20.
[287] James Grant, *Great Metropolis* (New York: Theodore Tester Sanders & Co., 1837), 139.
[288] Robert Gillies, Memoirs of a Literary Veteran: Including Sketches and Anecdotes of the Most Distinguished Characters from 1794-1849 (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), 57.
[289] Maurice Lindsay, *History of Scottish Literature* (London: Robert Hale, 1977), 284.
[290] See Gordon, *John Galt,* 1-5.
[291] Quoted in Collins, *Profession of Letters*, 242.

word *utilitarian* in the *Annals* and adapted it not only as the name of the society, but also for his philosophy.[292] He remarked:

> I did not invent the word, but found it in one of Galt's novels, the *Annals of the Parish*. In one sentence of this book (if my remembrance is correct) the Scotch clergyman of whom it is the supposed autobiography, finding heretical doctrines creeping into his parish about the time of the French Revolution, warns some parishioner not to leave the gospel & become an utilitarian. With a boy's fondness for a name & a banner I seized on the word.

Galt's fame began to spread in London. One of the immediate outcomes of this was that he was admitted to the famous circle that grew up around the renowned earl and countess of Blessington.[293] The acquaintanceship with Lord Blessington, even though they differed in politics, since he was a Whig, grew into friendship. According to the writer Miss Pigott, the earl, like Ellice and Lockhart, rendered Galt "essential services out of pure esteem for his probity and talents." He also made many other acquaintances in the countess's salon, which was mostly attended by a wide range of people who shared her interest in cultural issues and liberalism in politics. For instance, in Blessington's house, Galt met John George Lambton, earl of Durham, who went to Canada in 1838 and undertook a wide range of reforms in the government. One of the propositions that Lord Durham carried out concerning the government of the Canadian provinces was one which Galt had submitted to him in 1826.[294]

In the twenties, Galt had another chance to pursue his career as a lobbyist in parliament. London life, besides its literary societies and amusements of different types,

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[292] John S. Mill, *The Early Draft of John Stuart Mill's Autobiography*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), 84. For Galt's use of the word see Galt, "Anno 1794" in *The Annals of the Parish* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1978), 134**.**

[293] See Michael Sadleir, *The Strange Life of Lady Blessington* (New York: Revised American Edition, 1947).

[294] Timothy, *Canadian Odyssey*, 48, 49.

gave Galt political acquaintances, like Alexander Boswell, George Canning, James Downie.[295] His political affiliations were not very clearly stated. It is difficult to refer to a consistent political view in Galt. At times he described himself as a conservative and at times as an ardent reformer. He confessed that he was a Tory, but besides these notes in his two works on his life, there is little talk about politics. This was perhaps because, in Scotland after the Jacobite rebellions and in general after the French Revolution, being a Tory became both a habit and a fashion. He inherited it also from Greenock, for he wrote: "No town was generally more loyal than Greenock; for myself, I have never, in any situation, had much taste for politics, but I have leant all my life to Toryism; - my politics are perhaps better expressed by the recently assumed term of Conservative."[296] However, his politics were really not stern enough to define his relationships. He said that he was not very fond of being with Tories, finding them too narrow minded. It was among more liberal minded men that he felt comfortable. Although he wrote in the Tory *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, he was not like its other authors. His centrist stance became even more obvious when he was offered the editorship of *The Courier*, but had to resign because, in his words:

> The politics of the journal was a little too ardent for the spirit of the times…Accordingly without manifesting particular solicitude to make myself remarkable, I began by attempting gradually to alleviate the ultra toryism of the paper, by explanations of more liberality than the sentiments of any party.[297]

In other words, he pulled it back towards the centre. This was an inclination that would reveal itself again and again. He himself actually said that he was not political. He was a practical man and most probably refrained from making much of his Tory identity openly

[295] Galt to W. Blackwood, 18 May 1822, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4008, f. 169; Galt to W. Blackwood, 28 May 1822, NLS, Blackwood Papers, f. 175.
[296] Autobiography, vol. 1, 21, 28.

because he was involved in the lobbying business. He must have thought that it would have been counter-productive in his work. He revealed that most of his acquaintances were Whigs or at least had Whig affiliations.[298]

His associates seem to have been Members of Parliament, men of rank associated with the parties of the time. This even created a rumour, which the famous literary critic of the Tory magazine *The Quarterly Review*, Croker wrote in a letter to Peel, that Galt was one of the authors who had been patronized by Whigs.[299] The patronage system continued to exist well into the nineteenth century. The press had their favourers and supporters, whether it was the opposition or the Treasury.[300] In return for favourable articles and news, magazines and newspapers received financial support and intelligence from the government or opposition groups. There were some important Whigs to whom Galt was close. Henry Brougham, a middle-class Scotch lawyer and Whig MP as well as one of the chief *Edinburgh Reviewers*, was well known for patronizing some minor Tory writers. Then, there was Edward Ellice, a Whig MP who had Canadian connections and future secretary of war,[301] to whom Galt was close, and Lord Blessington, who was on friendly terms with Galt. However, there is no confirmation that Galt had a patron. He inscribed some of his books to people like Ellice (*Autobiography*), Brougham (*The Radical)*, and George IV (*Literary Life)*; but this is not evidence enough.

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[297] Ibid., vol. 2*,* 197.
[298] W. Ashton, "Regional Realism in Four Novels By John Galt" (Master's Thesis, University of Guelph, 1979), 31.
[299] Letter from Crocker to Robert Peel quoted in Ian Gordon, "Galt and Politics," in *John Galt: Reappraisals*, ed. Elizabeth Waterston, (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1985), 120.
[300] See for cliental relationships see Stephan Koss, The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981); David Ayerst, Guardian, Biography of a Newspaper (London: Collins, 1971); The History of 'The Times:' The Thunderer in the Making, 1785-1841 (London: Office of the Times, 1935); A. Aspinall, Lord Brougham and the Whig Party (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972).
[301] Ellice was introduced to Canadian trade through his grandfather. In 1822 he supported Wilmot's Canadian Government and Trade Bill. From the moment that he was involved in Whig politics he was known as a radical. His friends were Burdett, Hobhouse and Whitbread.

The early decades of the nineteenth century had been hard because of the financial burdens of the wars and, to a certain extent, the trade embargoes imposed by Napoleon. Foreign affairs and Britain's military involvement on the continent were thus a major factor in creating factions and differences in opinion. As factionalism marked early nineteenth-century political life, many newspapers and journals found life easier. For example, Lord Wellesley, who had been head of the Foreign Office until March 1812, became one of the targets of *The Times*, which was supported and supplied with information by Lord Brougham. [302] After the consequences of the French Revolution had been seen, radicals were not numerous; but the *Westminster Review* continued to host radical ideas and receive support from the small number of radicals there were. The major discussions, however, occurred among the moderate reformers and moderate Tories, and the old and renewed High Church/King Tories who came to be known as Ultras, a term borrowed from the extreme right faction in France.[303]

The press reflected one of the major issues of discontent, namely the war in Spain that was led by Lord Wellington.[304] The reaction towards Britain's involvement in war came to be known as strident patriotism, and Whigs such as Brougham supported this. Those who agreed with him saw Wellington as one who wanted to exalt war and enlarge the theatre of war in which Britain was already engaged. The other faction, however, who supported Wellington, in which the Tory author Hazlitt played a major role, denounced the Whig press for being short-sighted. Within this atmosphere, the Whig position

[302] Thunderer in the Making, 150.
[303] About factions and their reflections in the press, see Ayerst, *Guardian*, 17-30.
[304] See Thunderer in the Making, 150-55.

seemed to be more conservative. Expansionist and interfering policies in Europe were being rejected because they were regarded as ruinous to British trade. Galt showed his position within this argumentation in his articles on economic politics, here he argued for stability, perceived as crucial for trade.[305] When he referred to himself as conservative, he seems to have been describing this stance against any major involvement on the Continent among other things.

Although he asserted that he was not political, he had some interest and pleasure in following political news and foibles in the capital and found Edinburgh's disinterested attitude to political issues in London wrong. This becomes clear in a letter that he wrote to Blackwood about his magazine and the parties in Edinburgh. The letter concerned a dispute between Scott and Lockhart. It is Lockhart whom Galt criticised because of his "lack of London knowledge, that is of the manner of dealing with a certain class of our metropolitan gentry." He continued by saying that if Blackwood were not so conservative, he could have served him with an abundance of caricature sketches from London, but "somehow in Edinburgh your worthy politicians on both sides cannot suppose anything of this sort to be done without a sordid or a political motive." His interest in "harmless foibles" would not be accepted by the Edinburgh literati or politicians, because they would take this sort of writing as a severe attack on their personalities. Galt concluded that they could not "be joked upon without doing any thing detractive to their personal worth – you are all too sharp in your contentions in the North."[306] He appears to mock the conservative and rigid attitude of the Edinburgh literati and politicians but moreover he seems to be critical of provincial politics. His attack on

[305] See below, chapter 3.
[306] John Galt to Blackwood, 1820, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4006, ff. 219-20.

"personal worth" surely indicates Galt's belief that in Edinburgh provincial pride held the critics and writers back from informing the readers about the metropolis, where real politics were taking place.

His aspiration to stay away from political parties, being more pragmatic than politically principled, may have a connection with a new job opportunity that was offered to him. In 1820, a group of Canadian settlers asked him to be their agent in preparing a bill for them to the parliament. During the Anglo-French War, Upper Canada was invaded by the Americans and the armies of both sides left the region deserted. The inhabitants asked Galt to act in their name to accelerate the process of compensation that the British government promised. In all his dealings, he made a great effort to be a good agent for the Upper Canadians. He had to involve himself with MPs and the cabinet. Collaboration with the press and such party men helped to determine alignments in Parliament.[307] He made use of the press with several reflective articles. However in the long run Galt's relationships with the gentry class of Upper Canada proved to be unsuccessful.[308]

Galt was appointed agent towards the end of December 1820, which brought him close to the Whig MP, Edward Ellice. He was one of Galt's senior parliamentary contracts. Together with Alexander Gillispie, Galt was appointed as agent for the inhabitants of Upper Canada. He had worked on a scheme for developing crown lands in Canada and selling them at a profit to new colonizers. Four years after the Canadians' first appeal five commissioners were appointed – Colonel Cockburn, Sir John Harvey,

[307] Koss, Political Press, 1.
[308] A detailed analysis of his difficulties in Canada is offered in Jessie Kennedy Herreshoff, "Letters of John Galt: The Canadian Years (Ph.D. Thesis, Wayne State University, 1988); see also Elizabeth

Galt, Mr M'Gillivray and Mr Davidson.[309] Galt became the secretary to the newly established Canada Company and spent some years in Upper Canada, Ontario (1826-1830), founding the town of Guelph in 1827.

However, Galt in Canada is another story completely. In this thesis Scottish issues will be the focus and thus Canada will not be dealt with in great detail.[310] In brief, in Canada distrust and jealousy, together with worried shareholders who had hoped for greater and quicker gain, made him unpopular, although not among the settlers. Approaching the change in the government in the autumn of 1830, Galt's time in Canada, too, was coming to an end. Douglas described this period as:

> There were not wanting signs of friction between the Government and the Directors of the Company, the stock of the latter fell to a discount, and the Directors thereupon taxed their Commissioner with extravagance in the carrying out of his plans. He began to find himself subjected to petty annoyances, and at this time an incident in which he had humanely, but perhaps injudiciously, befriended some helpless emigrants served further to embroil matter.[311]

After many accusations and misunderstandings (although he was found judicious and successful by the Office at Geneva)[312] he arrived in May 1829 in Liverpool and rushed to London, only to face some panicking creditors. He disappointedly commented at the end:

> The Canada Company had originated in my suggestion; it was established by my endeavours; organized in due disregard of many obstacles by my perseverance; and, though extensive and complicated in its scheme, a system was formed by me, upon which it could be with ease conducted. Yet without the commission of a fault – for I dare every charge of that kind – I was destined to reap from it only troubles and mortifications, and something which I felt as an attempt to disgrace me.[313]

Waterston, "John Galt's Canadian Experience: The Scottish Strain." *Studies in Scottish Literature* 15 (1980): 257-62.

[309] See on Galt's Canadian years in Moir, "Biographical Memoir," xxxv-xc.

[310] A comprehensive study on Galt in America and in some extend Canada is the article of Charles E. Shain, "John Galt's America," *American Quarterly* 8 (Autumn 1956): 254-63.

[311] Douglas, '*Blackwood' Group*, 83-84.

[312] Moir, "Biographical Memoir," lxix.

[313] Cited in Moir, "Biographical Memoir," lxxii.

Galt was economically deserted and one of his creditors instigated legal proceedings against him and this resulted in his imprisonment for some months in the King's Bench Prison at Southwark. As Harriot Piggott puts it: "His too great ardour in every enterprise, and too great confidence in public men, led to pecuniary embarrassments which oppressed him in his home-life until he was removed from his invalid chair to his couch, and finally to his bier."[314]

He needed money and he laboriously gave himself to producing several articles and stories. After he was released he became, for a short time, the editor of a London newspaper, *The Courier,* known as Ultra-Tory.[315] It was a paper under the control of the Treasury at that time. Actually it was one of the newspapers that was apt to shift its political allegiances as the times required. In the 1810s it was mostly in the hands of Lord Brougham, the chancellor of the Exchequer. The editor, Gibbons Merle, who had been a printer and hoped to obtain public office, after a change in the government, handed in all the letters from the previous administration to Brougham's secretary. It was to change its opinion again when the Tories began to rise. Lockhart had recommended Galt for the position as editor. However, as suggested before, the politics of the paper did not much suit Galt: it was too Ultra for him. Soon Galt started to introduce a more liberal spirit into the paper, which, according to him, did not cause a decrease in the circulation. However, shortly after he resigned, and he later explained in his *Autobiography* that *The Courier*'s editorship was not suitable for him. Lockhart, on the other hand, said: "So Galt is done. Poor devil, I thought he must be floundering sorely! What is to become of him after this

[314] Galt, "Advertisement," by Harriot Pigott, in *The Demon of Destiny and Other Poems* (Greenock: W. Johnston and Son, 1839), iii.
[315] Ultras were right-wing Tories and were known as ardent reactionaries in the parliament.

new proof of his unmanageable temper and vanity?"[316] His energy and wishful nature had not yet failed, but it was decreasing.

Ill health started to affect him. After his arrival in London he suffered from nervous illness, in addition to a slight paralytic stroke, which affected among other things his eyesight. He was tired, stressed from his confinement in prison, and distressed by his unmerited disgrace. Nevertheless he had to continue to work, especially now that his three boys were coming of age. The late twenties and thirties thus were years in which he wrote constantly, for money: there were stories, reviews and articles. These were sad years, marked by the deaths of friends and his mother. The news of illnesses of others brought 'sullen' thoughts.[317]

Thanks to his friends, Lockhart and Ellice, who offered their aid, he found the means to survive in 1831.[318] Relief came when the stock of the Canada Company rose and his reputation became rehabilitated in the eyes of the public. He made a last effort to establish a joint stock company, being inspired by the rise of the Canadian Company's stock and the formation of the Liverpool Company. Again he consulted Ellice who promised to help him, but the usual procedures and difficulties, particularly with regard to land prices presented themselves.

He now started to publish in *Frazer's Magazine* with several nom-de-plumes like Cabot, Nantucket, Agricola, Domenichino.[319] In political terms *Frazer's* was similar to *Maga*. It even managed to obtain some of *Maga's* main authors. In its very early days, the 1830s, it had contributors of great importance: Thackeray, Carlyle, Disraeli, Lockhart,

[316] See Aspinall, *Politics and Press*, 230.
[317] *Literary Life*, vol. 2, 314-15.
[318] Gordon, "Galt and Politics," in *Reappraisals*, 126.
[319] Whatley, "Introduction," in *John Galt 1779-1979*, 11.

Francis Mahoney and Maginn.[320] Galt's contributions were mainly commercial pieces but he also wrote novels, poems and works in romantic style such as *Southenan*, a story of Mary Queen of Scots, which had its origins in early childhood memories of the ruined castle that he saw during his trips to Greenock. There was also a biography of Lord Byron. [321] The finished work initiated a storm of criticism. Galt had his own ideas about Byron. He was not only depicted as a romantic hero, but also as someone who occasionally acted in a spoiled manner, though Galt did not neglect to praise his personal and poetical abilities. His poem *Epigram* described Byron:

> With title, wealth, and genius blest,
> The noble Byron knows no rest;
> From clime to clime, he flies in vain,
> Nor finds a refuge from his pain.
> Is love, rejected love the cause,
> Perfidious friendship, or the laws?
> Or does the moon control his blood?
> Ah no. What then? His books reviewed.

The *Athenaeum* was one of the severest critics of his *Life of Byron*. Galt was mostly honoured among the Fraserians.

Although following William Blackwood's death, the new owners of *Maga*, his sons, cold-shouldered Galt, *Frazer's* continued to give him a place of honour. He was given here a much greater position than in the *Maga* circle, and he continuously attended

[320] For some notes on Galt in *Frazer's* see, David Groves, "'High-Mindedness in Such a Self-Worshipper': John Galt, Byron, and *Fraser's Magazine*," *Bibliotheck: A Scottish Journal of Bibliography and Allied Topics* 18 (1992-1993): 22-39 and Groves, "Galt, 'Delta', and *Fraser's Magazine*," *Notes and Queries* 40 (March 1993): 46.

[321] Lawrie Todd, 1830; The Life of Lord Byron, 1830; Boggle Corbet or the Emigrants, 3 vols., 1831; The Lives of the Players, 1831; The Member, 1832; The Radical, 1832; Stanley Buxton,, 3 vols., 1832; Autobiography, 2 vols., 1833; Eben Erskine or the Traveller, 3 vols., 1833; The Ouranoulagos or the Celestial Volume, 1833; Poems, 1833; The Stolen Child, 1833; Stories of the Study, 3 vols., 1833; Literary Life and Miscellanies, 3 vols., 1834; A Contribution to the Greenock Calamity Fund, 1834; Efforts by an Invalid, 1835; The Demon of Destiny and Other Poems, 1839.

the circle's meetings.[322] The January issue of 1835 opened with an engraving of the Fraserians. The group was drawn by Maclise and included the magazine's major writers like Coleridge, Thakeray and Carlyle. Galt was depicted as sitting in the back room of the company. Although not as rewarding and stimulating as William Blackwood's, in this company he was free and could pursue his writing in a liberal manner, without Blackwood's or Wilson's (*Maga's* editor) criticisms of his colloquial language or the manners of his characters.

His two political novels published in this last decade of his life, *The Member* and *The Radical,* showed his interest in and thoughts about the politics of the time. Both were published shortly before the Reform Act of 1832 and written in the midst of political turmoil. These two satires, as one might call them, show both a popular view of politics and a good insight into the political manoeuvres of this period.

3.3 Death

After October 1832 his health declined rapidly. Although he was struck down by another stroke, he still managed, among other works, to dictate his two-volume *Autobiography* and, in 1834, his *Literary Life* which he dedicated to the king, acknowledging him as his literary patron. In the preface to his *Autobiography* his editor remarked that "although he complains of being a feeble cripple, and that his 'right hand has lost its cunning,' his ails are not circumscribed to these afflictions."[323] Galt's greatest worry was that he could not "employ himself in any other pursuit than in those of literature."

[322] Gordon, *John Galt*, 129.
[323] Galt, "Preface," in *Autobiography,* vol. 1, x.

In 1834 he decided to return to Greenock, but on the way he was confined to bed in Edinburgh with another stroke. Curiously, a few houses away from him lay William Blackwood, his old friend and publisher, also unable to move. Their careers had gone more or less hand in hand and so was it to the end. It was Dr. Moir, known to the readers as Delta (Δ), who carried messages to between the two. Blackwood died before the two could see each other again.

Recovering a little, although still lame in one leg and arm, Galt proceeded to Greenock. After 1838, Miss Harriet Pigott plagued him, and later Mrs Galt, with letters requesting information about Galt (Mrs Galt declined her demands).[324] Apparently she wanted to write a biography of Galt, though she did not pursue this. However, she left the documents she gathered behind. Greenock was not any more the oasis of his youth.[325] Not only was it a disappointment in comparison with the town of his boyhood memories, but he was, on his return, economically in a state of disaster. The pension approved by the king proved to be just a single payment. After couple of painful and economically difficult years Galt, died here on 11 April 1839 at the age of 59. Just three month before his death he had suggested another work to Constable.[326]

John Galt was a man who was been both neglected and appreciated – often at the same time in different circles. His character started its formation in a small, developing Scottish town. The early influences of his environment at length produced sophisticated views about his own culture, as he encountered the cultures of others. His experiences of daily life in trade and travel fused with his reading and he tested Enlightenment

[324] Frykman, *Scottish Stories*, 26.
[325] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 34.
[326] Quoted in W. M. Parker, "John Galt and His Critics: Some New Light on the Novels," *The Scots Magazine* 31 (1939): 20.

convictions about history and society. His engagement in the politics of the period made him value realistic perspectives more than romantic and idealistic writings. The profession of writing itself became in this realism a secondary pursuit. Lastly, let him speak for himself:

> For many years, have I employed my pen for a higher object than the tailor does his needle, or the cobbler his awl. But it is not my own mediocrity that I affect to think comparatively little of the trade. It is because I more esteem a greater and a brighter pursuit, and believe that there is truth in the old adage, which says 'the man who makes a blade of corn grow where it never did before, does more good to the world than did Julius Caesar.' With this aim I have long been animated, and if at times I have felt a higher motive in literary tasks than the mere providing of forage for the animal, it was in the hope of showing to some one hereafter, that I was not incapable of attaining more renown as an author, had I not been actuated by a better purpose. Indeed, though never a sportsman with a gun, not a courser with harrier, I am conscious of having been a mighty hunter, The wild beast of the wilderness have been chased by my schemes, and have fled in alarm from my progeny.[327]

[327] *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 29, 30.

CHAPTER 4

CONSERVATISM AND ENLIGHTENMENT: DICHOTOMIES?

So far, then, as philosophy or doctrine is concerned,
the wise Conservative travels light.
Ian Gilmour, *Inside Right (1977)*

This chapter discusses John Galt's ideas on economics and law reform, as part of a wider creation of a general conservative culture or attitude in early nineteenth-century Britain. He contributed to and reflected this, by making use sometimes of Enlightenment – mainly Scottish Enlightenment – concepts, such as stadialism, often justifying his use of these ideas with religious arguments. I shall try to describe how this legitimisation of conservatism functioned, chiefly with reference to Galt's concerns about free trade and penal law reform.

4.1 Politics and Galt

John Galt was a self-professed Tory for whom the *status quo* was the essence of social peace and liberty. Yet he also advocated the "practical anticipation in public opinion."[328] At times he also called himself a conservative. Galt said often that he had never "had much taste for politics" but always leant to Toryism.[329] As outlined in the second chapter,

[328] Galt, *The Autobiography of John Galt*, vol. 1 (London: Cochrane and M'Crone, 1833), 95.
[329] *Autobiography*, 1, 28, 70; Ibid., vol. 2, 7. Certainly, however, he was greatly interested in general politics. This is evident from his correspondence. See for example, Galt to Blackwood, National Library of Scotland [NLS], Blackwood Papers, MS 4006, ff.219-20v; Galt to Blackwood, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4008, ff.172-73v, 192-93v; NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4010, ff.149-50.

born into a middle class family in Irvine, he was the son of a sea captain who was involved in shipbuilding and commerce. He tried to establish himself as a merchant for most of his life and eventually became involved in lobbying for the passing of bills in the Parliament and became an administrator in the settling of land, for the Upper Canada Company. However, his literary works were perhaps his most successful enterprise.

He detested factionalism and detested fervent loyalties to a particular party. His two political novels *The Member* and *The Radical*, both written in the year of the first Reform Act, showed his, perhaps, apolitical attitude and gave the impression that individuals were more motivated by personal desires and convictions, than by any party loyalty.[330] His novels often touched on political matters such as the necessity of morality and the desirability of a flexible class structure, gradually achieved.[331] Surely, the statement that he was not political meant not that he was not interested in it or outside this circle. As a man of letters he had close personal ties to political circles. As William Thomas says "high politics and reviewing [in magazines] were intimately related."[332]

He opposed radical, revolutionary or even reforming politics, and added that he would call himself "by the recently assumed term of Conservative," one who advocated the "practical anticipation of public opinion."[333] His conservatism was of the Burkean type, which regarded society as a natural, organic product of slow historical growth, in which institutions embodied the lessons learned by previous generations and developed

[330] John Galt, *The Member and the Radical* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996).
[331] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 297. Carey Kaplan calls Galt as an independent and lone wolf separated by social position, interest and political sympathies from the early nineteenth-century Scottish literati. Carey Kaplan, *John Galt and the Scottish Novel* (Ph.D. diss., Uni. Of Massachusetts, 1972), 97-98, 99.
[332] William Thomas, "Religion and Politics in the *Quarterly Review*, 1809-1853," in *History, Religion and Culture: British Intellectual History 1750-1950*, eds. Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore, and Brian Young (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 136.
[333] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 28, 95.

in response to immediate needs through minor reforms.[334] Existing practices could be perfected by minor reforms, and this in itself assumed the possibility and desirability of progress:

> People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation and a sure principle of transmission, without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free, but it secures what it acquires.[335]

Galt held a notion similar to Burke's: that the origin of civil society and any progress and tendency to perfection was the consequence of God's will. Both dependence on the past and progress were inherent in the natural system created by God, unalterable by any measures of human legislation.[336] This type of conservatism revealed itself in Galt's thoughts about free trade, crime and punishment, as he reached back to a long established tradition and indicated the unreadiness of society for radical, substantial reforms. Conservatism of such a type, Burke's or Galt's, approved some gradual development and minor reforms. Seen in these terms, conservatism in Britain did not therefore have difficulty in using contemporary theories, such as stadialism, that facilitated the justification of protectionism and gradualism.[337]

It is generally recognised that conservatism gained considerable support in Britain starting in the late eighteenth century. It has been argued that the main reason for this

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[334] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J C. D. Clark (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 184, 328, 412.
[335] Burke, *Reflections*, 184. Galt was dependent on Burke, as noted by Frykman. See Eric Frykman, *John Galt's Scottish Stories* (Uppsala: A. –B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1959), 133, 198. For Galt's stadialist-gradualist attitude, see *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 94-6 and, Galt, "The Free Trade Question, Letter 1 to Oliver Yorke, Esq.," *Fraser's Magazine* (Nov. 1832): 593-94
[336] Galt, "An Essay on Commercial Policy," *Philosophical Magazine* (April 1806): 104-12; and *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 94; "Free Trade Question:" 593-4; Burke, *Reflections,* 262.
[337] Duncan Watts, *Tories, Conservatives and Unionists 1815-1914* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994), 4, 5. For the broad argument for gradualism in early nineteenth-century administrative change see, David Roberts, *Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960) and

trend was the French Revolution and that it was also a response to demands, which would come to be seen as liberal, that grew out of the intellectual life and British political culture of the eighteenth century.[338] The growth of political parties was certainly a significant development in this period.[339] In domestic politics there were now new demands for social and political reform to do with religious discrimination, parliamentary composition and electoral issues. The Whig party tried to draw attention to domestic issues from the ongoing discussions about Britain's role in Europe and territorial expansion overseas. Tories on the other hand gained political influence as proponents of warfare and sought the continuation of the dominance of British power in a post-Napoleonic Europe. The Tory government, was ruled by the Pittian "principle," which was declared by the Pitt Club of Scotland (founded 1814) as sustaining the "highest pitch of national glory."[340] Their interest in keeping Britain in a state of war was accompanied by Pittite anti-radicalism, which held on to a social order based on hierarchy and property, whereas Whigs increasingly were pressing for parliamentary reform, especially after 1815, "when a popular opposition rose to unsettle ruling groups."[341]

Conservatism in the period appeared in many forms and cannot be attributed thus to just one group or party. To be a Tory certainly did not mean to be a conservative or a reactionary. The Whig and Tory division was not simply a division between liberal and

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Oliver MacDonagh, *Early Victorian Government 1830-1870* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977).

[338] Ian Christie, *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain: Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Bruce Lenman, "Political Attitudes during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars," in *Integration, Enlightenment, and Industrialization: Scotland 1746-1832* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), 100-13.

[339] Brian Hill, *The Early Parties and Politics in Britain 1688-1832* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 169-79.

[340] Printed circular, Pitt Club [1814], NLS, Airth Papers, MS 10956, f. 78.

[341] Michael Michie, *An Enlightenment Tory in Victorian Scotland: the Career of Sir Archibald Alison* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1997), 4.

conservative, as it is difficult to see a consistent adherence to party politics.[342] During the debates about a reform bill in the late 1820s, Tories were fragmented into factions, such as Ultras (right-wing Tories and ardent reactionaries) and liberal Tories (Canning's supporters, pro-reformist).[343] Robert Stewart, the biographer of Henry Brougham, says rightly that in the early nineteenth century Whig and Tory were still in general "alliances between men of birth and men of intelligence."[344] Galt confirms this himself, saying

> Indeed, I have always thought that the innate character had more to do with the distinctive marks of Whigs and Tories, than the bigots on either side, in their pride of mind, admit. Probably, owing to this cause, I have never considered the exotic doctrines of my associates very seriously, at least it has so happened, that my most intimate friends have been all Whigs.[345]

Political terms had various uses, then as now, and might simply be used in derogatory ways.[346] Conservatives, who were not even members of the same party, were seen as the Opposition until the late 1820s. For Robert Peel, who introduced the term Conservative to the Tory party in the 1830s, the essence of Toryism lay in a strong government that subsisted with firm leadership, sound administration, the maintenance of law and order and the recognition of rights and duties. Even as late as the 1840s Peel was a proponent of what Gash described as the "governmental ethic," the belief that a parliamentary party was there to sustain government, not to create or control it, "Conservatism…was not a

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[342] Alan Beattie ed., *English Party Politics*, vol. 1 (2 vols: London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 36-43.
[343] In the 1830s there was an effective mobilization of Conservative support, especially in the provinces, and conservative associations like Westminster Conservative Society were organized. See Norman Gash, "Peel and the Party System 1830-50," in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series., vol. 1 (London, 1951), 50.
[344] Robert Stewart, *Henry Brougham, 1778-1868: His Public Career* (London: The Bodley Head, 1986), 2.
[345] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 197-8. Also Galt to Moir, London 21 September 1830, NLS, Miscellaneous, MS 9856, f. 3.
[346] See Robert Willman, "The Origins of 'Whig' and 'Tory' in English Political Language," *The Historical Journal* 17 (June, 1974): 247-67.

tactical doctrine designed to draw votes to the Tory party; the Tory party was a tactical device to make Conservatism the basis of government."[347]

Galt, in his weak assertions about his political ideas, suggested that he was opposed to radical, revolutionary or even reforming politics, and he himself said he preferred Tory by the newly assumed term of conservative.[348] Galt may be seen as a natural adherent of Burkean, Pittean and Peelean conservatism that favoured the *status quo* and attempted to create and preserve indefinitely a balance between Church, society and politics. It was a declaration that man must accept the wisdom of the past. Yet it also assumed the possibility and desirability of progress.

Galt's sceptical approach to radical changes and search for a balance between reform, morality and necessity, as will be seen below, sounds similar to Peel's principles for a Conservative party cited in his open letter to his constituents of the Borough of Tamworth, known as the Tamworth Manifesto (1834).[349] He defined the Conservative Party's aims as to conserve the best features of the past while accepting some moderate, necessary reforms.[350] Exemplifying this in his speech in 1838 he declared:

> By conservative principles, I mean, and I believe you mean the maintenance of the Peerage and the Monarchy – the continuance of the just powers and attributes of King, Lords and Commons in this country … By conservative principles I mean, that, coexistent with equality of civil rights and privileges, there shall be an established religion and imperishable faith and that established religion shall maintain the doctrines of the Protestant Church…By conservative principles I mean … the maintenance, defence and continuance of those laws, those institutions,

[347] Gash, "Party System," 55, 56, 58.
[348] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 28.
[349] For Peel's importance for the new Conservatism see N. Gash, "The Founder of Modern Conservatism," in *Pillars of Government* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), 98-107.
[350] N. Gash, *Sir Robert Peel: The life of Sir Robert Peel after 1830* (London: Longman, 1972), 94-99; and see Sir Robert Peel, *The Tamworth Manifesto*, 22 July 2002, Victorian Web, ‹http://65.107.211.206/victorian/history/tamworth2.html›,05.04.2003.

> that society, and those habits and manners, which have contributed to and mould and form the character of Englishmen.[351]

These ideas exemplified the evolving Tory philosophy which focused on the traditional governing institutions, the Crown, the aristocracy and the church, which were felt to be threatened by the aims of the French Revolution.[352] Peel's reformist side led him to believe that resistance to reform, especially protectionism, was selfishness. He referred to this in his final ministerial speech in the House of Commons, in June 1846, speaking of the "monopolist who clamours for protection because it conduces to his own individual benefit."[353] And Huskisson said: "I am one of those who hail the dawn of liberal principles which have begun to illuminate the commercial horizon."[354] Galt too, perceived commerce as a major means of progress. Galt saw that progressive and conservative convictions were not necessarily mutually exclusive and accepted some of the Tory principles of his time. However, there were differences, from the Tory reformers, when it came to the question of free trade and what he thought practicable in his age.

4.2 Political Economy and Stadialism

From his writing, it is apparent that Galt was very much interested in manufacturing and questions of commerce. In his book *the Majolo* he gave an illustrative description of his views about the progressive character of trade and merchants:

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[351] "From a speech by Sir Robert Peel at Merchant Tailors' Hall, 12 May 1838," quoted in Beattie, *English Party Politics*, vol. 1, 99.
[352] Andrew T. Jenkins, *Sir Robert Peel* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), 20.
[353] Robert Peel, "Resignation of Ministers, June 29 1846," in *The Speeches of the Late Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel: Delivered in the House of Commons* (London: Georger Routledge, 1853), 717.

> The merchant, however, lives by cultivating amity between nation and nation; his profit is obtained by promoting the benefit of others; his barks explore the remotest regions, and carry with them knowledge on their prow, and the seeds of industry in their cargoes.[355]

As he explained in his Autobiography, in his early years in London, he was drawn to what was called the science of political economy. First, like Adam Smith he began an "arduous" study of the history of trade, covering topics such as the ancient commerce of England and the origins and development of bills of exchange.[356] Smith's book *An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776. He came to the conclusion that one could view history as developing in stages, which were constituted by differing modes of production and commodity exchange. Smith developed a general model theory that there were four stages of society: hunting, pastoral, agricultural and commercial stages. However, he did not believe progress to be either linear or inevitable. Societies could be stuck at a given stage, move backwards or display characteristics of different stages at the same time.[357] Sooner or later, though, the stages led eventually into his contemporary system, which marked a transitional period in which protective duties were to be abolished. Accordingly, a favourable balance of trade was no longer the result of protective laws such as the Navigation Acts. He believed that the closed and protective economic system of Britain and its colonies was no longer as profitable as free trade would be. For Smith, property ownership and laws governing property were constantly changing and developing. The development of the government

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[354] William Huskisson, *Free Commerce With India* (London: Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, 1825), 3.
[355] Galt, *Majolo: a Tale,* vol. 1 (2 vols. London: T. Faulkner, Sherwood, 1816), 104. As mentioned before this novel deals with a number of social and psychological subjects. As Frykman remarks, Galt surely intended the Sardinian, who tells the story, to be his mouthpiece. Frykman, *Scottish Stories*, 30.
[356] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 85.
[357] See Alan Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment: the Historical Age of the Historical Nation* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), 75-6; Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

and of the legal framework of property resulted in some re-adjustments in the forms of production and led to a more developed society.[358] Thus the old taxation system was in need of reform.[359] Likewise, he suggested that even morals had to adhere to some elementary principles of change. In a sense, he talked about a secular form of moral which is the principle of avoidance of harm or injury to other people.[360] He was not willing simply to wait for the natural dissolution of the obstacles to free trade. However, government interference in and regulation of the economy were not needed. Without them the Unseen Hand, operating through free trade, could ensure the general good.

Among politicians epitomising this new spirit were the Whig, William Pitt the Younger, and his Tory followers, George Canning and the Tory Reformers, as they were called: Peel, Robinson and William Huskisson.[361] These same concerns were present in the arguments that the colonies should become prosperous hinterlands, rather than be economically and politically tied to Britain. The speech of the MP Huskisson on trade with India, published in 1825, is a good expression of the new idea of a prosperous hinterland. He proposed the removal from the statute book of all prohibitive enactments and of enactments imposing protective duties on trade with India and a revision of the list of 'Innumerate Articles', a heading that concerned special duties.[362] The petitions of the merchants of the City of London to Parliament in 1820 for a new economic policy

[358] Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 76.
[359] Chapters 2 and 3 in Roy Douglas, *Taxation in Britain since 1660* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999); and his *Adam Smith and Free Trade* (London: International Union of Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade, 1974)
[360] Knud Haakonssen, "From Moral Philosophy to Political Economy: The Contribution of Dugald Stewart," in *Philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. V. Hope (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), 210-32.
[361] William Huskisson (1770-1830) was a statesman who filled many high officials posts in several ministries. He was killed at the opening of the Manchester and Liverpool railway. George Canning (1770-1827) was a celebrated statesman and orator, Secretary of State for foreign affairs in 1807, and again in 1822 and MP for Liverpool.
[362] See Huskisson, *Free Commerce*.

included similar ideas.[363] They presented a petition that outlined the advantages of free trade: "A policy founded on these principles would render the commerce of the world an interchange of mutual advantage, and diffuse an increase of wealth and enjoyments among the inhabitants of each state."[364]

Similarly, Galt believed that trade had a place of prime importance in the increase of wealth, living standards and civilisation. However, he was suspicious of the Tory Reformers' commitment to free trade. Galt's earliest article, "An Essay on Commercial Policy," appeared in the *Philosophical Magazine* in 1806.[365] In the mean time many articles related to the question of free-trade and development appeared not only in some 'progressive' magazines like the *Edinburgh Review*, but also in magazines thought to be Ultra-Tory, like *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review*. There was no argument against free trade in principle; free trade was agreed to be desirable in the long run. Opposition to free trade was based on the idea that, in the existing economic environment, it would be premature to introduce it into Britain and Europe. Free trade was seen as immediately damaging for the domestic economy and also in terms of the maintenance and continuity of the Empire. The condition of Europe in the aftermath of the French Revolution, during and after the Napoleonic Wars, was unstable. Free trade would further destabilise the situation, increasing chaos and poverty, hurting the lower classes and thereby increasing the political threat posed by them. In contrast to the conviction of Smith, or the Jacobins, that principled change, or even revolutionary

[363] Edward G. Power, *Robert Peel, Free Trade and the Corn Laws* (London: Longman, 1975), 33.
[364] Quoted in ibid., 33.
[365] Galt, "An Essay on Commercial Policy," in *Philosophical Magazine* (April 1806): 104-12.

change, could usher in the next stage in society's development; conservatives argued that such change would only result in disruption of the natural flow of development.

Galt explained that the main problem with liberal political economy was that those who upheld the theory of free trade were confused and "embarrassed" by the existence of different nations. The natural tendency of trade was "to blend the interests of mankind together, and to disseminate throughout the whole species a principle of mutual dependence." However, there was also the fact that trade was supported and "occasioned by state necessities." "Commerce furnishes the most powerful engine of war; it is always with a reference to war that it receives the encouragement of statesmen." And Galt believed that commerce, in the Europe of his day, needed the encouragement of the state; the Invisible Hand was not yet ready to take over.

> The existence of that subdivision [into national states] seemed to me to present insurmountable obstacles to the establishment of that right commercial system to which the French merchants alluded in their famous 'laissez nous faire' to Turgot, and that we were in consequence only allowed instead of a science the consideration of that policy which political circumstances required; still I conceived that we could more nearly approximate to it than we had done.[366]

The problem, defined by Galt, was in a competitive market. In theory, according to Smith, if both France and Britain would abolish custom duties, Britain would then be able to buy cheaper French wine and France to buy cheaper British goods. This would both increase consumption of these goods and reduce smuggling in both countries, thus eventually increasing both countries' customs income.[367] However, on the other hand, this would mean that both sides would lose some of their industries, those unable to

[366] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 94.

overcome foreign competition. According to Smith, this would result in the re-deployment of workers from these declining industries to other competitive and still exporting ones. While in theory this sounded fine, Galt was one of those who thought that this would not work in practice:

> To the theory of the free-tradist objections cannot well be made, for the truths from which it is deduced are as indestructible as the radical principles of the rights of man, and as impracticable, too, in the present state of society, and the conditions of the communities into which the worlds is divided.[368]

He believed that in practice the reduction of duties on raw materials would not bring about industrial growth, but rather would increase unemployment. Besides increasing poverty, free trade would create a threat to the existing balance in the economic system, as various food riots and attacks on mills, such as those in 1822 in Scotland and those in 1826 in Lancashire showed. Food prices did fall, but not enough to increase the standard of living or even to prevent further impoverishment. As Power puts it "the problem was really the price of bread not … luxury goods."[369] It was the price of these that fell most from the reduction of customs dues. Galt, agreeing with this conservative stance, wrote some articles and in his conversations among friends Galt soon became known "as the opponent of the Huskissonian charlatanry." "I use the word because no other presents itself to me at this moment which so fully expresses my opinion, at the same time I really believe that he [Huskisson] possessed some hazy honest glimmerings of truth."[370]

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[367] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London: Penguin, 1969), 30.
[368] Note that he refers to the notions of the French Revolution. Galt, "Free Trade Question," 593.
[369] Power, *Robert Peel, Free Trade*, 37.
[370] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 95. There was between Galt and Huskisson a personal controversy as well. Huskisson as the Secretary of State communicated the complaint of Sir Peregrine Maitland, the local governor in Upper Canada, to the Court of Directors. See Moir, "Biographical Memoir," lx.

According to Galt the system of free trade was one that belonged to a later, more developed state of society. Moreover development was dependent on the natural laws bound to God's will and any motion and development was within the scope of God's will and He had set a natural pace of development within His divine system.[371]

Although, superficially, Galt's belief in universal laws bears resemblance to the mechanistic views developed in the early Enlightenment and the ideas held by Deists, Galt's beliefs were formed more by his Presbyterian upbringing, especially his strong belief in predestination and Christian orthodoxy.[372] Galt believed that revelation was the only way that human beings could know about the nature of God and his creation. He explains in his later writings that God's Providence could always be seen in the order of things and the succession of events. This order of things and succession of events reveal God's Providence, "and such is the harmony of the universe, that the smallest occurrence affects its whole frame and system." It might be compared, he explains, to a machine consisting of many small parts, every one having influence on the others. Each part in this universe is subject to certain "principles or laws of its own particular organization, as well as to those of the universe." All these parts, the events, lead "to the accomplishment of the object for which the whole was formed." However, the mind or reason of human beings is not capable of comprehending this whole object. Any knowledge of it is confined to God's revelation. Human beings can have a partial grasp of it, but no real understanding of this whole principle of motion (the individual and universal). "The

[371] The debate of reasoning and revelation was, certainly, one of the central issues in the eighteenth century. The use of revelation as a historical source, as Galt seems to treat it, was not exceptional and to put it in Counter Enlightenment history would be oversimplification. For more on this see C.D. A. Leighton, "'Knowledge of Divine Things:' A Study of Hutchinsonianism," *History of European Ideas* 26 (2001): 159-75.

[372] John Macqueen, "Ringan Gilhaize and Particular Providence," in *John Galt 1779-1979*, ed. Christopher

individual motion consists of augmentation or diminution of growth or of decay; and the universal motion consists of the revolutions which the thing as a part of the universe performs, in connexion with the other parts." Now as all actions happen in accordance with a Divine plan and as they all create an effect, these effects could be said to be predetermined:

> If, therefore, the universe consists of things in motion, arranged according to a plan, it must also be allowed that the action of one thing upon another will produce an effect previously determined. This is the law of necessity, philosophical fatality, religious predestinarianism.[373]

This whole system of motion sustained Galt's comprehensive determinism: everything is comprehended within this system or universe and was the product of Providential Will. This did now allow any radical intervention, since that would break the machine's ordered functioning. The notion encompassed progress; for Galt stated with deep conviction that there would be a time when principles such as free trade or Christian morality would rule societies. However, this seemed impossible for the near future.

> Why, the Christian religion is in its nineteenth century, and though there can be no doubt of the excellence of its morality, mankind are not yet arrived at such a state of improvement as to be practically ruled by it. No doubt trade is in a state of perfectibility as well as man, but even the coffin of England will be rotten before the world can be in a condition to abrogate the usages of commercial policy.[374]

This immediate pessimism did not, however, negate his conviction that trade was subject to change and development. He believed that there had to be some reforms and better regulations in the practice of commerce, more applicable to contemporary conditions of trade and Galt did admit that some of Huskisson's reforms were desirable.

A. Whatley (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1979), 108.
[373] *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 287-88.

"The improved knowledge of the age suggested to him the necessity of several better regulations in the practice of commerce than had previously existed."[375] In general, Galt held, this should be the attitude towards older methods of ordering things, that rules no longer efficacious should be changed and adapted to the new state of the society. For instance, feudal laws in their time had been efficacious and had worked to good effect. However, they were seen to be an "oppressive bondage" by those living in later ages.[376] When the feudal system declined, "usages and customs under it were deemed detrimental to mankind." The fact that they had once been regarded as beneficial was not a sufficient reason to preserve. However, it was foolish to apply a system in society that was not ready to accept it. Each society had its own ways and life span. This marked every society existing in time. After finishing a stage, the society would take on a new form; but it had to continue at its natural pace to the end of that stage. For this reason, if radical changes were made that did not fit with the natural life of that stage of that society, the harmony of the society would be shattered, producing confusion and anarchy, the natural consequence of an unnatural development.

Thus it is clear that Galt believed in progress and a stadialist theory. Confirming his pragmatic inclinations and justifying a gradualist reform, like other conservatives, Galt made use of notions like stadialism. The belief that civilisations develop according to a system of progressive stages provided the conservatives a basis for their stance against radicalism and revolutionary ideas. Thus, as Jerry Muller also said, "there is a false dichotomy of conservatism and Enlightenment."[377] Conservatives as well as Tories

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[374] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 95-96.
[375] Ibid.
[376] Galt, "Free Trade Question," 593-94.
[377] Jerry Z. Muller, *Conservatism: an Anthology of Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.:

were anti- or counter-Enlightenment men.[378] However, it is also to be noted that conservatism was not directly opposed to ideas of progress nor did it find them alien, in that it often incorporated a concept of benign change. As Disraeli said: "a statesman is the creature of his age." So conservatism, like any other intellectual trend from the period, acquired its form and meaning in a context or atmosphere.[379] To put it another way, conservatives as well as liberals were heirs to the Enlightenment. Conservatism and progressivism (in so far as progressivism can be attributed to 'liberalism') both developed in an intellectual atmosphere that underlined concepts such as change, progress and development in the intellectual, material and political spheres. Conservatism and progressivism were in fact intimately connected. One of the reasons for the misrepresentation or false dichotomy of conservatism and development has been the result of a misinterpretation of the Conservative attitude to the newly emerging political economy and the belief in free trade.[380]

In the course of the eighteenth century, even for Conservatives, it had become difficult to resist the idea of progress as a necessary phenomenon.[381] The growing possibility of an effective continental threat to Britain's commerce raised theoretical questions about the growth of commerce, which was seen as the condition for creating a developed civilization, and practical discussions about its regulation. The question of

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Princeton University Press, 1997), 5.

[378] Francis R. Hart, *The Scottish Novel: From Smollet to Spark* (London: J. Murray, 1978), 31.

[379] Disraeli quoted in Robert Nisbet, *Conservatism: Dream and Reality* (Bristol: Open University Press, 1986), viii.

[380] One of the most important preoccupations of the Scottish Enlightenment was political economy. See Donald Winch, *Adam Smith's Politics: An Essay in Historiographic Revision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) and Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff*, Wealth and Virtue: the Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 1983).

[381] For an investigation of Enlightenment ideas in conservative thought, see Duncan Forbes, "'Scientific' Whiggism: Adam Smith and John Millar," *Cambridge Journal* 7 (1954): 643-70; Ronald Hamowy, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Theory of Spontaneous Order* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinous University Press, 1987), ix.

free-trade, associated with a major progress in the history of commerce and so much discussed in journals of various kinds, became identified with the Whigs as a liberal cause. In fact progress was also a key idea in conservatism. Progress was a theme both for liberal writers of the Enlightenment such as Adam Smith and for conservatives such as Burke and Galt.

Galt believed that good and practical statesmen could gain valuable insight from the latest developments in the field of political science.[382] For him the mind set of a good statesman lay in his understanding and analysis of contemporary circumstances. There was a political science and culture with which the statesman had to be familiar. If these were understood, the statesman would know the degree of change that the system demanded.[383] And it was not only in his political writings that Galt used this rule of natural necessity. He also expressed it through his own histories of Scotland. It was not by chance that he wrote about the Covenanters, believing, as he did, that society needs to hold on to some of its older values in order to step forward, just as Peel wished to adhere to the established religion, its faith and doctrines.[384] This same conservative belief, progressive and holding to traditions, helped in the creation of an account of a national history and thus in defining the nation.[385] Galt saw his own contemporary society as being in a transitional stage in which, he was sure, radical political theories would not bring about progress. However, he saw a need for certain reforms directed to remedy immediate problems and needs, rather than for the sake of radical, rational principles.

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[382] He described the "Seven Principles of Political Science" together with the "Seven Principles of the British Constitution" in *The Monthly Magazine* 48 (December 1819): 400.
[383] Galt, "Free Trade Question:" 594.
[384] See Peel in a *Speech of 1838*, quoted in Paul Adelman, *Peel and the Conservative Party, 1830-1850* (London: Longman, 1989), 10.
[385] Philip Lynch, *The Politics of Nationhood Sovereignty, Britishness and Conservative Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 1.

4.3 Law, Society and Social Order

Galt's suspicion of reform and his view of human nature also became evident in his writings on criminal law reforms. Yet here we also see some Enlightenment ideas, united with conservative and religious convictions, influencing his thought. This time, however, his conservatism rested not on stadialism, but on Enlightenment humanitarianism and on his acceptance of the preordained sinfulness of human nature.

Among Galt's less investigated ideas are those concerning law, morality and human nature. His thinking on these subjects, as he explained in his *Autobiography* (1833), was initiated by a discussion of crime, punishment and law reform stimulated by some Enlightenment thinkers, especially Cesare Beccaria and Gaetano Filangieri. This discussion was mostly concerned with a humanitarian and secular approach to the building of systems, demanding a codification of laws that would constitute a development in civilization.[386] Punishments were to be made appropriate to crimes and over-harsh punishment so such as torture, were to be abolished. Galt also witnessed the pragmatic attempts at law reform initiated by the British government and politicians like Robert Peel. These reforms were made, not in response to humanitarian demands, but were the result of concerns about public order and the increased crime rates of the time. Although Galt wrote no single tract on these issues, he frequently inserted discussion of some aspect of law, and its relationship to human nature, in many of his works.[387]

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[386] Beccaria's ideas were adopted in Britain, especially by lawyers and the middle classes, who saw his penal sanctions as part of the underlying principles of an improved civilisation. See, Anthony J. Draper, "Cesare Beccaria's Influence on English Discussions of Punishment, 1764-1789," *History of European Ideas* 26 (3-4) (2000): 174.

[387] Some of his works which have implications for this attitude are: Galt, *The Autobiography of John Galt,* vol. 1 (London: Cochrane and M'Crone, 1833), 494-96; "Free Trade Question,"; "An Essay on Commercial Policy," *Philosophical Magazine* (1806): 104-12; "Seven Principles of Political Science" together with the "Seven Principles of the British Constitution" in *The Monthly Magazine* 48 (December,

Galt's interest in law started off as a practical need to understand the legal aspects of mercantile issues, and he was concerned to develop his skill in this area. He even considered becoming a lawyer at one point in his life. He explained, "I made myself master very early of the *Lex Mercatoria*, not merely by reading it through, but by studying it as necessary to my progress in the world."[388] Later on, his readings led him to more abstract issues in the field of law: how and why it emerged and developed. In 1819 he wrote two columns in *The Monthly Magazine* describing seven principles of political science and the British Constitution. These columns presented his perception of the development of law.[389] His view was similar to that of important Enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire, Montesquieu and Filangieri, and to the last of these Galt would later devote much more attention. Like them, he acknowledged that power was the principle of all social relations.

According to Galt society was composed of individuals having the same rights and power at the time of their creation; and each individual possessed a natural selfish inclination to satisfy his own will. He viewed the main unit of the society as being the family, under patriarchal rule. Families then formed small communities, which chose magistrates to maintain order. Governments were thus created to check the "natural despotism" of mankind.[390] To bring this natural despotism inherent in human beings further under check, since governments as well as individuals were under the same threat, societies invented some rules derived from some universal laws and heeding certain

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1819): 400; *Majolo*.
[388] *Autobiography,* vol. 1, 85. Moreover it was believed that evolution of law provided a model for other social and political changes. See Christopher Harvie, "Revolution and the Rule of Law," in *The Oxford History of Britain*, ed. Kenneth O. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 473.
[389] "Political Science" together with the "British Constitution:" 400.
[390] "Political Science:"400.

specifities of nations. These were "laws … invented to regulate the administration of … authority," with some consideration to geographical and climatic differences in each country. Thus, although these general laws applied to all human societies, in practice there were differences, according to local traditions and differences in climate.

He exemplifies these differences in the second article, in which he spoke of the British constitution, as reflecting both generalities and the specificity of British society. It ensured property and individual rights and preserved the existing social hierarchy, according to needs imposed on the population by Britain's climate and local traditions.[391] The constitution was an example of knowledge progressively accumulated over time. It developed and changed as circumstance necessitated, in Burkean fashion, an organic entity that adapted itself to changing conditions. Against accusations made by foreigners that the constitution was clumsy, he wrote in his *Letters from the Levant*:

> They have no idea of continual effect arising from the nature of that multifarious tendency to revolution observed in the frame of our government - that which is continually repairing what is decaying, and supplying by suitable expedients whatever deficiency is found. The British constitution…adapts itself to the immediate occasions of the people.[392]

Galt's thoughts rested on contractarian arguments, accepted by many thinkers, notably Locke. They were used, especially by the Whigs, to declare a requirement for popular consent during the eighteenth century.[393] Individuals formed a contract with their rulers, handing over some of their rights for the sake of an orderly and secure environment. Thus the sovereigns founded the legitimacy of their rule on popular consent. Legal rules functioned mainly in the public sphere to regulate social interaction,

[391] See "British Constitution:" 400.
[392] *Letters From the Levant*, 50-51.
[393] See about Whig doctrine of popular consent in Murray G. H. Pittock, *Inventing and Resisting Britain: Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 33, 38, 101

leaving much liberty for private affairs. Galt's views were in line with the theories about law and governance prevalent in his day. Those spoke of the need for the rule of law and peace in society and commercial conduct. As Hume argued, freedom and security of property could only subsist in a state of lawfulness.[394] Likewise *The Grammar of Law*, which was published in English in 1839, stated that general obedience to laws could only increase the order and happiness of the community.[395] Thus, according to Galt the society was established on contractarian terms and laws supported the maintenance of peace and order. Trade, as we have seen in the previous section, was an essential component for any material progress in the society and this could only be obtained in a peaceful environment for which the laws were the guarantee.

4.4 Reform in Penal Law

During the early nineteenth century this theory of law and society was a commonly accepted one. Starting in the second half of the eighteenth century, debate had shifted towards questions of the efficacy and decency of the laws and to what extent they answered the needs of the age. Questions of both legal and economic reform were major concerns for some contributors to the *Edinburgh Review*, such as Henry Brougham, Francis Horner, and Francis Jeffrey. Brougham and Horner had already in 1764 initiated a discussion group, the Speculative Society and the Edinburgh Academy of Physics (1797) was established in order to analyse some of the new scientific investigations

[394] M. Elosegui, "Revolution, Freedom, and Law in David Hume," in *Law and Enlightenment* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Univ. Press, 1990), 45-46.
[395] A Barrister, *The Grammar of Law: Containing the First Principles of Natural, Religious, Political, and Civil Law, Together with a Synopsis of the Common and Statute Law. To which is added the Royal Prerogatives, and An Explanation of Law Terms in general Use* (London: Joseph Rickerby, 1839), iii-iv.

together with Enlightenment themes in the field of law, rights, physics and economy.[396] At the meeting of January 20th, 1798 Brougham and Horner presented two papers to the members of the Academy "with respect to a reform in the laws."[397] A couple of years later, reading these articles, Galt's interest was drawn to reforms in law and the system of punishment. In 1805 and 1806 translations of important thinkers of the era, like Beccaria and Filangieri, were made and articles appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*. Galt's interest in law reform increased again towards the late 1810s and in the 1820s when Peel, Home Secretary under Lord Liverpool, introduced discussion of reform and initiated some specific reforms in following years. Peel saw these reforms as part of a policy of better control and security, and as a measure to deal with abuses.[398] Though adapting the humane and secular views of eighteenth century legal theorists, Galt developed his own interpretation of penal law though basing it on orthodox Christian beliefs. He was more concerned for the rehabilitation of the offender than with the ability of punishment to reduce crime for the safety of society.[399] Galt's ideas will be more understandable put into the context of the general discussions and the practice of reform in law.

[396] Clive, *Scotch Reviewers,* 21. See also Robert Stewart, *Henry Brougham,* 8-9; Kenneth Bourne and William Banks Taylor, *The Horner Papers: Selections from the Letters and Miscellaneous Writings of Francis Horner, 1795-1817* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 36; about Academy of Physics see David Welsh, *Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Brown* (Edinburgh: W. & C. Tait, 1825), 77, 498-506; Bourne and Taylor, *Horner Papers,* 33-36, 39, 91.
[397] Welsh, *Thomas Brown*, 503-04.
[398] Peel, "Address to the Electors of the Borough of Tamworth, December 1834," *Speeches by the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel: During His Administration, 1834-1835* (London: Roake and Varty, 1835), 3-4.
[399] Frykman, *Scottish Stories,* 205.

The discussions about penal law reform revolved, to a certain extent, around the obedience and happiness of the community.[400] In doing so, there was a tendency to separate the concept of crime from sin and make punishment more effective. These discussions developed around the fact that crime, and the punishment that was associated with the crime, did not relate well to one another. In other words the critics of the contemporary criminal law argued that the penalty should correspond to the seriousness of the crime.[401] In Britain there were more than 200 offences that might warrant the death penalty, which was imposed arbitrarily according to the will of a jury.[402] The question was often not whether the accused was guilty or not, but whether he deserved to hang. Especially during the early nineteenth century, the rapid increase in both the population and the crime rate argued the need for legal reform and security.

Between 1822 and 1829 such needs were seen by Peel, as Home Secretary, together with Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade, and Robinson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who initiated reforms in the criminal law, reorganised the prison administration and formed a London Metropolitan Police Force. The Combination Act was repealed, after which workmen were allowed to join trade unions, which to some extent lessened the conflicts which led to criminal convictions.[403]

Peel's efforts were mainly pragmatic: to rationalize criminal law, simplify its language, classify provisions and condense them into one statute in order to make

[400] It is generally argued that the discussions and reforms were made with a utilitarian point of view. Jeremy Bentham, the jurist and radical legal reformer who was regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism. Beccaria was seen as the forerunner of Bentham. David B. Young argues that Beccaria should be seen as one who blended utilitarianism with retributism: "Cesare Beccaria: Utilitarian or Retributivist?" *Journal of Criminal Justice* 11 (4) (1983): 317-26.
[401] Colman Phillipson, *Three Criminal Law Reformers: Beccaria, Bentham, Romilly* (London, Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1923), 191.
[402] See chapter 7 in Ian Gilmour, *Riots, Risings and Revolution: Governance and Violence in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Pimlico, 1993)

criminal law more convincing and credible to individuals.[404] The introduction of a police force, first tried out in Ireland and then in London, was thought of as a preventive measure.[405] As Boyd Hilton remarks, the main motivation for Peel's reforms of the justice system came about, not because he found the penalties too severe, but because they were ineffective and there were too many uncertainties with them. For example, often royal pardon or other devices had to be used to free those condemned to death. For Peel this showed a weakness in the system, which hurt its credibility and thus threatened peace and order in Britain. He explained in a letter that prisoners were living too comfortably and the real aim of these reforms was to reduce the number of convicts by setting up a proper and "effectual punishment."[406] He held that justice and the penal system had to be guarded against those innate destructive tendencies in human nature. He "held a pessimistic view of human nature, and believed that retributive punishment formed an essential part of God's dispensation on earth, being necessary for the 'moral discipline (a favourite phrase of Peel's) of corrupt humanity'."[407] Thus all his attempts were to create a deterrence system which was efficacious and consistent.

However, on the theoretical level, throughout Europe, discussions about penal law reform were directed by humane concerns, leading to widespread criticism of severe forms of punishment and torture. There were demands for the principle of equality before the law to be implemented – though this was less of an issue in England. *Philosophes*

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[403] N. Gash, *Mr Secretary Peel (*London: Longmans, 1985), and Power, *Robert Peel*, *Free Trade,* 35.
[404] He gave a speech in the Parliament in 9 March 1826 on "Consolidation of the Criminal Laws," *The Speeches of the Later Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel: Delivered in the House of Commons*, vol. 1 (London: George Routledge, 1853), 397, 400. See also the speeches made on 22 February 1827 and 13 March 1827.
[405] Jenkins, *Robert Peel*, 27.
[406] "Mr. Peel to Rev. Sydney Smith, March 24, 1826," in *Robert Peel From His Private Papers,* ed. Charles S. Parker (London: John Murray, 1899), 401-02.
[407] Jenkins, *Robert Peel*, 28.

such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Beccaria (1764, translated into English, 1767), Filangieri and later Bentham, were among the famous critics of contemporary legal practice.[408] The arguments of Filangieri, a Neapolitan lawyer also found a place within the discussion, and complemented Beccaria's ideas about humanitarian treatment. However, he diverged from Beccaria's secularised view of crime.

A review that Galt read in the *Edinburgh Review* of the latest translation of Filangieri caused him to think further about the question of punishment. "Without any previous consideration," he said "excepting the work of Beccaria on *Crimes and Punishments*, always to me unsatisfactory, I stumbled by a sort of accident on the enquiries of Filangieri."[409] One of the arguments made by Filangieri ―according to the review― made a deep impression on Galt.

By the 1770s Beccaria had become one of the most celebrated writers on the subject of criminal law reform in Europe. Even though Beccaria's ideas were not universally accepted and indeed were strongly attacked both by jurists and churchmen, he exerted considerable influence on many Enlightenment thinkers.[410] In his writings, he consistently distinguished between crime and sin and sought uniformity, irrespective of person, in the application of the law. Like Peel, he attempted to make laws and punishments as reasonable as possible to everyone. He was convinced that a system with moderate laws would serve a didactic purpose and have a beneficial influence on the people, who were prone to commit crimes.[411] The result, according to Beccaria, would be

[408] Montesquieu (*L'Esprit des Lois)*, Rousseau, Voltaire and Beccaria (*Crimes and Punishment*) followed by Filangieri and in England Samuel Romilly and John Howard (*The State of Prisons)* among others.
[409] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 91.
[410] M. T. Maestro, *Voltaire and Beccaria As Reformers of Criminal Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 63. See also on his influences and how his ideas spread among the Enlightenment philosophers in Phillipson, *Three Criminal Law Reformers*.
[411] Marcello Maestro, "A Pioneer for the Abolition of Capital Punishment: Cesare Beccaria," *Journal of the*

the reduction of crime, since everybody would know what was criminal and what the corresponding punishment was. Punishment was a deterrent system for him, i.e. a means of preventing others from committing the same crime. Since human beings tend to avoid pain – characteristically it was the prospect of pain rather than pleasure that moved man to act – they would refrain from crime. Here, a short reference should be made to Beccaria's ideas about justice. Legal power was one thing, but right or justice another.[412] Beccaria said

> We must be careful not to attach any notion of something real to this word justice, such as a physical force or an actual entity. It is simply a way whereby humans conceive of things, a way which influences beyond measure the happiness of all. Nor do I speak here of that justice which flows from God and whose direct bearing is on the punishments and rewards of the after-life.[413]

His reflections on justice are interesting, especially read in the light of his thought as a whole. Galt, too, was worried about the inconsistencies in the legal system. He, too, declared that the word justice had no real meaning, but was subjective.

4.5 Crime, Sin and Punishment:

According to Beccaria the concept of sin had become generally irrelevant in the functioning of legal systems. In contrast to Beccaria, though, Galt insisted on relating sin to crime, which made his definition of both terms more complex. Beccaria had already been widely criticised by his contemporaries. However, Beccaria replied that,

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History of Ideas 34 (July-September, 1973): 465.

[412] R. Gillies, *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran: Including Sketches and Anecdotes of the Most Distinguished Characters, from 1794-1849* (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), 59-60.

[413] Cesare Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments and Other Writings,* R. Bellamy (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11.

> Some men have thought that the gravity of the sin plays a role in measuring the degree of criminality of an action…The gravity of a sin depends on the inscrutable malice of the heart, which finite beings cannot know without special revelation. How, then could it be used as a guide for the punishment of crimes? If such a thing were tried, men could punish when God pardons and pardon when God punishes.[414]

Galt thought that Filangieri had discovered the right road to truth about the relationship between sin and crime, but had not been bold enough to pursue it: "he seemed afraid of committing himself by stating what he thought of crimes and sins."[415] What Galt was talking about was certainly Filangieri's idea about absolute and relative goodness. The Ten Commandments were, according to Filangieri, a perfect model for the absolute goodness which had to agree with universal principles of moral conduct. Relative goodness, on the other hand, was the product of the particular and circumstantial laws of countries, which were congruent with the "character of a people," shaped by belief, climate, etc., and with universal principles.[416]

The article on Filangieri, which came out in January 1807 in the *Edinburgh Review,* was a review of the new translation of his book *La Scienza della Legislazione*, by R. Clayton.[417] Since it dealt with local imperfections in a continental system of criminal jurisprudence, Clayton claimed that the work, to the displeasure of the reviewer, was of less interest and relevance for British readers.[418]

Filangieri found that laws had one of two natures. There were those laws with universal qualities; and others that had local qualities. He started with the general

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[414] Beccaria, *Crimes and Punishments,* 22-23.
[415] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 91.
[416] Marcello Maestro, "Gaerano Filangieri and His Laws of Relative Goodness," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44, (Oct.- Dec. 1983): 688.
[417] "Review of *The Science of Legislation from the Italian of Gaetano Filangieri,* by R. Clayton," *The Edinburgh Review* (January 1807): 354-73.
[418] Galt's interpretation of Filangieri's ideas originates on the ideas of the reviewer, but when he wrote about them in his *Autobiography* he must have read the original by then, too.

principles of legislation, which he saw as relating to the preservation of peace and security within society. These aims, indeed, were, according to Filangieri, the great objects of civil society. However, against the attempts made by many thinkers to divide sin from crime within legal conceptualisation, Filangieri argued that the goodness of a law consisted in its conformity with common principles of morality and the precepts of revelation. "God and nature protect the rights of mankind, and no transitory expediency can justify their infringement." The review in the *Edinburgh Review* emphasized Filangieri's distinctiveness.

> He lived as virtuously as he wrote; and his abhorrence of spiritual abuses seems (which is rare in a continental philosopher) to have stopped short of irreligion. Hence, perhaps, the zealous friends of revolution spoke of him with coldness. 'Before we read Filangieri's book,' said one of them, with the foolish intolerance so usual in that school, 'it will be necessary to determine, whether a lord of the court, and a nephew of the Archbishop of Naples, is capable of rendering any service to philosophy.'[419]

Filangieri observed that laws in individual countries standing opposed to common morality and religious virtues "violate institutions more sacred than themselves, and resist an authority paramount to that by which they are prescribed."[420] So, accordingly, some of the problems in laws arose due to the gap between human positive laws and general rules of morality, which derived from revealed religion and nature.

Besides the general or universal nature of laws, there was secondly, as Montesquieu and Beccaria had pointed out, that which sprang from the individuality of nations, their different cultures and local traditions. However, it was generally accepted that social institutions were "not entirely the fruit of locally variable whim; there are

[419] "Review of *The Science of Legislation*:" 357, 355.
[420] Ibid., 358.

universally applicable standards."[421] The legislator, hence, had to realise that there were diversities among peoples, and communities, "in the constitution of their government[s]" and in "customs and religion…their climate, their position." When it came to the penal code, Filangieri had no doubt that crimes needed to be punished. However, he added that the laws had to be constructed or reformed in such a way that the people who would be subject to them would believe them to be justly enacted and enforced. This was the only way to make the society obey the laws, as well as accept the relevant punishments. Punishment was necessary for the welfare of society and for setting an example for potential criminals; but he was not convinced that punishment served the ends of retribution or expiation.[422] He agreed with most of the Enlightenment thinkers that punishment had to be more humane. Galt asserted that it was Filangieri's ideas that led him to think about the connection between sin and crime.

Similarly, Galt argued in his *Autobiography* that sin was the basis of crime. "Sins seemed the basis of crimes, although there were crimes of a very deep die, of which the original sins were comparatively not deemed heinous."[423] Galt agreed with Filangieri that human laws did not always conform to the natural law. As mentioned before, for Galt this natural system was a providential system, and crime and sin were similar entities; sometimes they were identical with one another.[424] He thought that crimes were proscribed by the society and the laws, which did not address morality or religious error, but only interfered when a crime threatened the order and peace within the society.

[421] Christopher J. Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1997), 75.
[422] Frykman, *Scottish Stories*, 205.
[423] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 91.
[424] Ibid, see also *Majolo*, vol. 2, 59.

Moreover, wrongly, crimes were seen as contagious and thus it was thought that punishment of criminal activity served as a deterrence for other vicious minds.[425]

The connection between sin and crime was not a new discovery, but in fact resembled sixteenth- and seventeenth century Presbyterian views. Galt's emphasis on morality for identifying criminality echoes the Christian approach to crimes and punishments. Joy Cameron argues that after the Scottish Reformation, the General Assembly and the Kirk sessions assumed much of the power, in the absence of central authority in Scotland. Within this system "the new religious establishment was not primarily concerned with protection from violence or with crimes against property but with weeding out and punishing behaviour thought to fall short of the ways of God. The accent had shifted from expediency to a moral code."[426] Times had moved on and Galt was living in an age when laws were more commonly enacted with the intention of protecting property and society. Although Galt's line of thought seems to have been influenced by contemporary views, it is clear that traces of this Presbyterian attitude to crimes still influenced his thought.

According to Galt there were two elements in a crime, one comprehended in worldly terms and another to be described in Christian terms. They overlapped and both had an impact on the society. Nevertheless, the legal system punished only the secular phenomenon, whereas the other, sin, enjoyed immunity. However since Galt saw sin and crime as related to each other, he held that a system of punishment which adopted only a secular perspective was neither good nor effective in dealing with the criminal (or diseased in Galt's analogy). This cure, or punishment could not serve as an example for

[425] *Majolo*, vol. 1, 153.
[426] J. Cameron, *Prison and Punishment in Scotland From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Edinburgh:

other individuals in the society. Crimes might result from innate propensities and the predilection likewise could be increased by "vicious indulgence." As one could increase one's ability in aesthetics by appreciation and study of art, bad inclinations could be increased by dexterous usage. Thus, it was important that individuals learn how to resist temptation that leads to sin and crime. This needed self-mastery and strength. Certainly, the development of a religiously formed moral conscience through education was part of this. As a matter of fact, the contemporary system of punishment prevented the true and proper analysis of the origins and nature of crime.[427]

Although he would agree that punishment for a crime was not superfluous, he was not convinced that punishment could be an example for others or deter others from committing a similar offence. Against Beccaria's conviction that "the object of punishments is simply to prevent the criminal from injuring anew his fellow-citizens, and to deter others from committing similar injuries," Galt developed the idea that punishment is really not useful in any way for curing criminals or deterring others.[428] His disagreement with Beccaria rested on this assumption of the inseparability of religious morality and criminal law. Most probably, Galt made the connection here between these two in terms of an act of the will that is rebellion against Divine Law. The existing system of punishment appeared to him inefficient and he tried to make it clear with an analogy to diseases. As one cannot cure a diseased individual by curing another infected patient with the same disease, so it was impossible to cure crime by judicial punishment.

> In a word, that punishment for example, showed but a shallow knowledge of human nature, and that it would be just as wise to expect a man could be cured of the scrofula by punishing another more afflicted with that

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Canongate, 1983), 18.
[427] He gives the example of Italian (Roman) law in *Majolo*, vol. 2, 59-60, 155.
[428] Maestro, *Voltaire and Beccaria*, 63.

> malady, as to hope that a criminal could be won from his propensities by showing him others in curing the penalty of malpractices.[429]

Frykman, Galt's critic, notes the same ideas appear in *The Majolo,* which echoes many of the ideas which Galt explains in his *Autobiography*. It is not that Galt did not agree with his contemporaries' views that penal reform was needed; on the contrary he thought that "culprits must be reformed, jails should not continue to be the seminaries of vice, and an attempt must be made to check the first symptoms of criminality."[430] However, it is apparent that Galt thought more about the nature of crime as a concept and the criminal more than his effect on society as a whole.

> "I do not understand that doctrine," answered Majolo, "the punishment of the vicious is not inflicted on their own account, but to furbish a motive of fear to the innocent. I have no faith in the system of penitentiaries, which is the fruit of such notions.[431]

This quote from *The Majolo* seemingly argues that neither capital punishment nor torture can benefit society. More profoundly, Majolo explains that crime involved or resulted from a distortion of moral qualities and any punishment inflicted would not have the effect "in preventing the secretion of the diseased humour of his [criminal's] mind."[432]

Galt explained that "the influence of the doctrine [of crime]has had a surprising effect, in at once softening pity for the guilty, and increasing sternness for the infliction of punishment." On the one hand he was aware that some punishments then practiced were brutal and senseless, while on the other hand there was human brutality and selfishness that had to be kept in control. His rather pessimistic approach to this whole

[429] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 91.
[430] Frykman, *Scottish Stories*, 204.
[431] *Majolo*, vol. 1, 154.
[432] Ibid., vol. 1, 214, 216.

topic rested on his scepticism about the goodness of human nature. "Humanity is more consulted in the mitigation of punishment than a wise policy derived from the nature of man." This nature of man was not to be trusted too much, since "[o]ur diseases or offences are manifold." Of course, he did not believe that doing away with punishment entirely was the solution.[433] The infected, so to say, the criminals, were certainly not to be abandoned.[434] Punishment or control of crime was a complicated issue that needed to be addressed in a different way. One of Galt's answers to this question was to ensure that Christian morality was not separated from social norms and laws.

Galt assumed that society was a contractual formation, as Beccaria did; that the nature of individual human beings was asocial, anarchistic and primitive, and only the desire for security led people to make contracts or collective agreements and thus societies. Human beings were unable to deal effectively with crimes, sins and punishments, because their societies - made up of these selfish individuals – were unwilling to cure these problems more thoroughly. "Society is not willing to touch more of them than is requisite for keeping the social community in order; we are in society, held together by ties more slender than we are willing to believe."[435]

Of the two notable continental legal reformist, although the better known of these was Beccaria and both were cited together, Galt declared his preference for Filangieri, whom he considered to be more tune with traditional views and Christian morality. He was suspicious of belief in the notion of the reform of human nature. His views about

[433] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 92.
[434] *Majolo*, vol. 1, 154.
[435] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 93.

legal reform rested on both Enlightenment humanitarianism and acceptance of the essential sinfulness of human nature. He pondered questions about the shaping of a social order and a legal system and moved on to the control of crime and deterrence. In this, he constantly disclosed a pessimistic view of human nature, a conviction that conformity to divine law was the origin of human happiness and identified human progress with the practice of religiously founded morality.

His religious treatment of the subject not only reflects his piety but his adherence to traditional values, as he thought it was a necessity not to forget tradition and belief. Galt's writings show that progressive ideas, which we will be discussed in the last chapter, were not always a benefit to society or productive of truth. Galt viewed progress positively, but reason was not in itself capable of being its engine. In the nineteenth century liberals as well as conservatives agreed to a large extent that the history of civilizations progressed in stages. The shift from one stage to another, especially for conservatives like Galt, was a question of being ready – the readiness of the social, technical and political structures. If the society was not ready in any area, it could not successfully progress to the next stage. Any untimely attempt to bring society forward would generate confusion and would lead to change in the opposite direction. He saw the French Revolution as the ultimate warning, as it wounded French society's development far more than any natural catastrophe. As he said, "It is the object and nature of society to refine itself by science and the arts which reflection and genius suggest for improvement,"[436] but he believed that "[m]ankind was regulated by the character of existing circumstances."[437]

[436] "Free Trade Question:" 593.
[437] "On Commercial Policy:" 107, see also *Majolo*, vol. 1, 106.

CHAPTER 5

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL AND HISTORY WRITING

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
T. S. Eliot*, Burnt Norton*

In his novels describing Scottish society Galt certainly thought that he was writing a sort of history rather than pure fiction. His novels were written in the form of annals, memoirs or correspondence, making them seem to be authentic. His readership was already accustomed to such a literary style and did not have much difficulty in grasping conceptual truths and even factual details in the stories' characters and events. He freely commented on the ordinary daily events found in western Scotland's parishes or towns, creating characters and daily life that his readers would have either experienced themselves or heard of from others. His economic, social and political history was already embedded in the oral or daily culture described. This chapter should be read as a basis and perspective in reading Galt's histories. He was certainly not a theorist, but it is evident from extracts of his thought that his perception of the historical novel and history writing were highly concerned with historicism and that his historical sources were not strictly confined to written documents.

5.1 Historical Writing and the Novel

Galt was deeply influenced by the mannerism of his period and the diction which he did not see as a reflection of the civil stage of the society, but instead as a peculiarity of his own nation. More importantly, he tried accurately to depict the religious convictions of his subjects; for that, he held, set the very foundation of the culture and mentality of the period. Thus, although God was not the main operator in his histories, his presence was always there in the thoughts and actions of his characters. He had no problem in saying that his histories should be read as theoretical histories.

In the early nineteenth century, history writing had not yet gained an ultimate and distinct definition as an academic activity and was therefore partly perceived as a literary endeavour, and, as it had been from antiquity, as a branch of rhetoric, as it is still is for some. Hugh Blair, the professor of rhetoric and *belles lettres*, referred to annals, memoirs and biographies as a part of historical composition, and added that they were only inferior, subordinate species of it.[438] The main focus of writing history was creating a sense of unity in the narrative, by having a connecting principle that would bring together the story as a whole. The concept of unity was also that which connected the *philosophe*-historians – as Voltaire and Gibbon, for example, are known - to their predecessors, though the *philosophes* diverged in certain aspects from them. Traditional Christian-humanist historiography had chronicled the political and military exploits of prominent figures. The *philosophes* mocked the follies of past benighted epochs and used their

[438] Keith Costain, "The Spirit of the Age and the Scottish Fiction of John Galt," *The Wordsworth Circle*, 11 (1980): 102. Lionel Gossman, "History and Literature," in *The Writing of History, Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, eds. Robert H Canary and Henry Kozicki (Madison: The University of

histories to celebrate the gradual rise of reason and learning from the barbarism and superstition of medieval times. However, the *philosophe*-historians also broadened the scope of historical inquiry to encompass social history (manners and customs), cultural history (art and literature), and economic history (change and development in commerce).

The famous participants in the Scottish Enlightenment – Lord Kames, David Hume, John Millar, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson – conceived of distinct economic stages in history from primitive, pre-agricultural societies to contemporary, commercial civilisation. They tried to treat documents critically and attempted to generalise on the basis of historical evidence. Stylistically, the philosophes disparaged the plodding, voluminous annals of the past and strove to fashion readable and explanatory narratives. Another primary characteristic of their writing was the rejection of divine action in history, even if not all of them were deists.[439] Traditional humanist history was written, in part, to demonstrate the workings of divine Providence, whereas the newly emerging forms of historical writing dismissed almost all invocations of the deity as super-historical exercises in theology. "God's disappearance," wrote Peter Gay, "left a vacuum that the secular intelligence was called upon to fill." [440] Histories were certainly not as secular as Gay suggests, for although super-historical invocations were dismissed, Providence continued to have a place in the historical writings of many authors. However, rather than invoking Providence as the source of change, historians focused on the mundane realities – social, economic, political, cultural – and developed their study

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Wisconsin Press, 1978), 13.

[439] Laird Okie, *Augustan Historical Writing: Histories of England in the English Enlightenment* (Lanham, Ma: Press of America, 1991), 4.

[440] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. The Rise of Modern Paganism,* vol. 2 (2 vols. New York, 1969), 390.

into a social science. History became regarded as a means of understanding human nature. It was made by man and was also comprehensible by him. This point of view, especially developed by Gianbattista Vico, saw history as a man made study that investigates what man has been, is and could be. God was not totally cut out; but divine Providence, according to Vico in his *New Science*, operated primarily through the human mind and will.[441] Galt adhered to these new views in history writing and was deeply interested in revealing the science of man and historicism.

Galt's interest in history was not confined to the narrative historical writing of the eighteenth century, as he was also highly interested in the period's other historical forms. There were still those scholars, writing about specific historical topics or events without framing their analysis in a narrative structure and regarded as antiquarians rather than historians because of their differing methods.[442] As mentioned before, Galt enjoyed reading local history, works on heraldry and pieces of antiquarian research. He was especially fond of Pinkerton, the famous antiquarian.[443] However, he chose to write his works in the new form of history writing.

In the early nineteenth century the novel joined other forms of historical writing and became institutionalised as a literary form playing a major role in nation building narratives, by transmitting and forming common conceptions of histories and values.[444]

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[441] Vico's ideas had a great influence during the nineteenth century, but certainly was known by French philosophe-historians like Montesquieu who was widely read in Scotland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 6 (9 vols., London: Image Books, 1985), 162, 161.
[442] Okie, *Historical Writing,* 5.
[443] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 86-87; David M. Moir, "Biographical Memoir" of the Author," NLS, Miscellaneous, MS. 9856/35, vii, xxxiv. First published as preface to John Galt, *Annals of the Parish* and *The Ayrshire Legatees* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1841).
[444] For an extensive discussion of this topic see Homer O. Brown, *Institutions of the English Novel From Defoe to Scott* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

Vico, in the early eighteenth century, had already pointed out that literature had a social role as an articulator of popular notions and as an instrument of the national voice.[445] Galt had probably a similar notion about his own writing. Certainly, others often remarked that he had written the most Scottish books about west of Scotland. According to Vico such narratives had a pivotal role in the development of political and cultural concepts such as the family, personal identity and history. Walter Scott was the eminent precursor of the historical novel, who through the many translations of his books, had made the genre popular on the continent as well as in Britain. Galt was a follower of Scott, though he differed from Scott in some crucial methods and was neglected in this connection.[446] Their ideas about the historical novel and what it should reflect were similar; but, in their approach to presenting the past to contemporary readers, they differed.

Generally, Galt made his first publications in magazines, which, long before the nineteenth century had become, like the new literature, a tool for propagating new manners, in terms of conduct, i.e. language and behaviour. There is a question about how widely the magazines were read; but it should, in any case, be recalled that each magazine was read by more than one person. Galt later had his novels published in book format as well, though his readers first had become acquainted with him through magazines. His works therefore can be described as popular works. Throughout the centuries, there had always been a literary form that served the roles taken up by popular historical novel, such as the romance and the epic. Galt did not much elaborate on the theory of the historical novel. In his introduction to Mackenzie's works Galt briefly

[445] Ibid., 2.
[446] Charles Swann, "Past into Present: Scott, Galt and the Historical Novel," *Literature and History* 3 (1976): 65-82.

mentioned that the literature of his time was the outcome of the Johnsonian School and Mackenzie.[447] However, Scott who was perceived as the founding father of the historical novel, gives more indication as to how it was perceived.

According to Scott the story-teller and history, both in terms of their written and oral forms, were sources influenced very much by personal experience, and contained the basis of all creative work.[448] He claimed that as a genre the historical novel took over the task of the romance. He said: "In its first appearance, the novel was the legitimate child of romance."[449] They were of the same species; but the historical novel had undergone a change: the novel had similar forms of expression but it also has a role as a producer of culture and nation.[450] The manners described and "the general turn of the composition" went through a change; but the author was confined to some of the peculiarities of "the original style of romantic fiction." In a sense, Scott admitted that the act of writing, especially novels, was taking part in creating a fashion or culture, as much as it was a reflection of it. As he explained — in his review of Jane Austen's *Emma* — the sentimental novel had performed its task as the follower of romance and in turn had given way to the newly emerging realistic style. This was "The art of copying from nature as…[it] really exists in the common walks of life, and presenting to the reader, instead of the splendid scenes of an imaginary world, a correct and striking representation of that which is daily taking place around him."[451] However, behind this realism or the truth in representation, the novel had an indispensable role of leading the fashion. As Scott said in

[447] Henry Mackenzie, "Introduction," by John Galt, *The Works of Henry Mackenzie, with a Critical Dissertation on the Tales of the Author by John Galt* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1824), 5.
[448] James Anderson, *Sir Walter Scott and History* (Edinburgh: Edina Press, 1981), 27.
[449] Walter Scott, "Review of *Emma,*" *Quarterly Review*, 14 (1815-16): 188-201 reprint in *Sir Walter Scott On Novelist and Fiction*, ed. Ioan Williams (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), 227.
[450] Brown, *Institutions*, 16.
[451] Scott, "*Emma*," 230.

his introduction to *Waverley*, a period in the past becomes outdated or fashionable through literary works such as the novel.[452]

It seems from Galt's writings that his works reflected Scottish culture and perhaps he was indirectly also re-enforcing goodwill and morals, which he saw as essential elements for the transforming of society. His historical narratives showed that not only contemporary politeness, but also the less refined manners and characters of the past were important. Like Hume, Addison and many others, Galt thought that tradition was a base on which to build a healthy and productive society. "Custom, as well as the approval of our friends, had the effect of making our opinions 'habitual' and 'easie' as well as 'delightful' to us and this in turn could explain why the modern world was filled with what Hume called 'knots and companies' of like minded men and women."[453] Traditions and manners were naturally inherent in a society, but they were also something that society needed to be reminded of or that needed to be re-constructed at times, and such was the effort of people such as Addison, Steele, and Mackenzie. Galt's novels reveal that he considered religious experience and morals to be the most important elements in the society's memory and these elements should be emphasized when forming a common consciousness within a nation. In Galt's *Ringan Gilhaize* the common reference point that held the depicted society together was the belief and experience of common constraints and the trauma of the second half of the seventeenth century. In *The Provost*, Galt gave pragmatic thinking, in terms of business and empire, as an example. Galt assured the reader that this self-interest or improvement and novelty would not always lead a society

[452] Scott, *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814, London: Penguin Books, 1972), 34-35.
[453] Nicholas Phillipson, *Hume* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1989), 28.

to disaster, but could benefit it as well. Therefore, he believed that verisimilitude was of the utmost importance for writing history. Politeness and rational thought could never by themselves be qualities that could turn a society into a nation nor were they capable of holding the society together.

Galt, like Scott, put great emphasis on creating a realistic description of characters and manners. Galt frequently remarked in his letters, as well as in his works, that his skill lay in his ability to portray characters. The characters he created, by their role in the events of their time and their psychology, gave the work a sense of realism in terms of manners and traditions, what Blackwood called a graphic description of Lowland Scotland.[454] In his *Autobiography* Galt said that "the discrimination of character is among the most remarkable of my pretensions."[455]

Likewise D. M. Moir's represented Galt as one of the most accurate historians of his times when he wrote the *Biographical Memoir*, which was attached to the *Annals* in its 1841 edition. Moir pointed out that Galt's Scottish tales, composed of the *Ayrshire Legatees*, the *Annals*, the *Provost*, the *Steam Boat*, *Sir Andrew Wylie*, the *Entail* and the *Last of the Lairds*, were "a view of the phases of society in the west of Scotland, such as it existed towards the close of the last [18th] and the commencement of the present century." Galt became an intimate friend of Moir's when he decided to move his family to Scotland, to Eskgrove, in 1818. As Moir was a member of the Blackwood circle and was living in the close vicinity, a friendship grew between them and was continued with frequent correspondence. For Moir, Galt was a "searching and vigorous intellect, of a mind original in its speculations and copious in its resources." Moir remarks that some of

[454] Blackwood to Galt, Edinburgh, 23 May 1820, EUL, Galt Letters, L.B. 1, ff.114-16.
[455] *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 88-89.

Galt's works can hardly be called novels, such as the *Annals* and *Legatees*. Moir noted that they were intended as theoretical "delineations of local manners reflecting realities as nearly and truthfully as possible." Moir's explanation of "theoretical delineation" explains Galt's term, used in his autobiography, "philosophical or theoretical history." Thus, as was rightly perceived by many critics of Galt, he intended to write a history by exemplifying and using conjuncture, a method used and explained by Dugald Stewart. His self-reflecting and original mind created works enduring in value not because they were perfect as artistic compositions or because of their faultlessness. However, they shed light on events and circumstances that had been forgotten long before and they were of value because they reflected national manners, showed ingenuity in tracing Scottish life and were "domestic illustrations of the historical events of a particular era as well as throwing light upon the combinations of thought and feeling to which these events owed their origin." Moir agreed with many other critics that Galt gave a picture of the society of western Scotland as it had been in the recent past, similar to that which Scott had given of to the eastern parts of Scotland.[456]

Galt's observations of both Scotland and elsewhere helped him to identify cultural similarities and differences and like many of his contemporaries he was deeply interested in writing about manners. In one of his letters, Park described Galt as being so "extreme a mannerist in style."[457] In his novel *Majolo,* the main character similarly reports in the course of his travels "I had adopted two of the most interesting objects of study; the correspondence of physical and moral phenomenon, with respect to individual character,

[456] Moir, "Biographical Memoir," xxiv, xx, xxv, xxiv.
[457] Park to Galt, February 1812, *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 131-32.

and of natural and political circumstances with respect to national."[458] Hazlitt, a literary critic from Galt's time, described him: "He is only the amanuensis of truth and history…All that portion of the history of his country that he has touched upon (wide as the scope is), - the manners, the personages, the events, the scenery – lives over again in his volumes."[459] His critic Booth later wrote that his characters reflected the truth and that he had a complete fidelity to life "surrounded with all their natural manners and simple activities."[460] Galt himself believed that his ability was "in the truth of the metaphysical anatomy of the characters, which though at first felt as faults in the author, and thought coarse, I have seen in them and [they have] been seen in their true light."[461] Similarly, Scott in his essay, "The Historical Novel," mentioned the problem of reflection and representation of the real when writing a novel. He went on to say that a historical novel was about "manners and sentiments which are common to us and to our ancestors, having been handed down unaltered from them to us, or which, arising out of the principles of our common nature, must have existed alike in either state of society."[462]

Whereas Scott, like Galt, described novel writing as the act of reconstructing the past through creating conjectures in terms of philosophical history writing — the historical novel as a form of Dugald Stewart's conjectural/theoretical history — a widespread notion held at that time was that the historical novel was "intermingling fiction with truth," or that it was "polluting the well of history with modern inventions."

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[458] Galt, *Majolo: A Tale,* vol. 1 (2 vols. London: T. Faulkner, Sherwood, 1816), 180-81.
[459] William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age; or, Contemporary Portraits* (1825) reprinted extracts in Peter Kitson, *Romantic Criticism 1800-1825* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1989), 164.
[460]Galt, "John Galt: A study in the Scottish Vernacular Novel," by A. Booth , *The Gathering of the West* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1939), 16.
[461] Quoted in Ian Gordon, *John Galt: The Life of a Writer* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1972), 79.
[462] Walter Scott, "The Historical Novel," reprinted in *On Novelist and Fiction*, 436. Originally it was written as a "Dedicatory Epistle" to *Ivanhoe*.

Scott saw this point of view as a major problem for the novelist: "it is true that I neither can nor do pretend to the observation of a complete accuracy, even in matters of outward costume, much less in the more important points of language and manners." However, according to Scott, the idea of representing the past as it was created another problem: the difficulty that the readership may be unable to understand some of the authenticities of the past.[463] The major problem then lay not in telling the story as it could have been, but in the author's attempt to reconstruct an understandable past for present or future readers. He thus spoke much of the contemporary reader. What was important was that he understood the circumstances of the past, aided by contemporary reflection, involving a translation of the past culture for the present one.[464] Galt's perception of this cultural translation was, however, different. He showed this in his representation of characters, such as the religious zealots, the Covenanters, by using a language that certainly differed from most of his elegant contemporaries. He tried to depict for his readership a Scottish culture that was true and loyal to Scottish history and tradition.[465] His means of establishing this correctness was accomplished in his narrative in the two ways, which were regarded by some to be vulgar: firstly, by his truthful historical representations and secondly by his Scots usage.[466] According to Galt, a translation of the past into the present or language into a contemporary English, or past manners into contemporary decorum was a distortion of the previous reality.

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[463] Ibid. 435.
[464] Brown, *Institutions*, 3-4.
[465] For instance *The Entail* is seen as a critique "of the displacement of all local Scottish tradition by British mercantile modernity with the stark claim that the dead past is dead and cannot be reanimated." See, Alyson Bardsley, "Novel and Nation Come to Grief: The Dead's Part in John Galt's *The Entail*," *Modern Philology* 99 (May 2002): 562.
[466] For his use of Scots and English see J. Derrick McClure, *"Scots and English in* Annals of the Parish *and* The Provost*." John Galt 1779-1979*, ed. Christopher A. Whatley (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1979), 195-210.

It seems that Scott, initially by writing many novels, endeavoured to give the reading nation a related and understandable past. According to Scott, a cultural translation was accomplished by making the manners and language contemporary. This created shared notions among the members of nation out of the unintelligible past.[467] In Edmund Burke's words, the creation of common notions was of the utmost necessity:

> an individual becomes a part of a people by sharing in these opinions, by adapting his behaviour to fit the pattern imposed by the opinions prevalent in his community and by accepting the manners, morals, and institutions, religious, social and political, that are consequently of the society's shared beliefs.[468]

This creation of a common mind was held to be of great necessity for a nation. However, this had another meaning for Galt. The construction of a developed culture and manners should not alienate people from their past manners, idiomatic dictions, nor their histories, no matter how old fashioned and rude they appeared. Contrary to current beliefs, he found that any translation of the past would estrange the nation further from their past. His letters to Robert Peel explain a lot about his intention to make the forlorn past of the Scots of the seventeenth century known to his readers again.[469] His construction of a historical consciousness rested on these principles. According to Scott "It is necessary, for exciting interest of any kind, that the subject assumed should be, as it were, translated into the manners, a well as the language, of the age we live in."[470] The object of the author was not only the transmission of the old but also of the still existing sentiments and manners to the readership and as well as attempting to define these

[467] Quoted in Penny Fielding, *Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture, and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1996), 11.
[468] Burke quoted in George J. Graham, "Edmund Burke's 'Developmental Consensus'," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 16 (Feb. 1972): 31.
[469] Letter Galt to Sir R. Peel, 26 April 1823, BL, Peel Papers, Add. 40355, f. 354.
[470] Scott, "Historical Novel," 435.

sentiments and manners as Scottish. That is to say, Scott was concerned with selecting a past upon which the future could be built, one that could be transformed into a contemporary generality. This writing procedure was intended to bring about a restructuring of the historical consciousness.[471]

Besides making a cultural translation, which was a distortion to Galt, but necessary for comprehension to Scott, it was important for a historical novelist that the national values, traditions and history were transmitted to the reader. If a period of the past — its events, manners and traditions — was to become fashionable through the narrations of historians and novelists, the historical novel needed to be an important force in the construction the present mind set. Secondly, in order to represent the heterogeneity of a nation, it had to emphasise the particular cultural and historical differences, such as the Scottish one. It was a history that reflected specificities within a wider universal history, as well as a mapping of manners in a natural history of humanity.[472]

Galt would have agreed completely with Scott's assertions about the national aspects of the historical novel. Furthermore, Scott believed that a truly good British novel had to show the nation what their traditions used to be and where they came from. This other essence of the novel was – like the epic or romance – to establish "the foundation of a nation and a national identity that represents Britain's 'natural' heterogeneity."[473] Although this understanding of the historical novel appears to be directed to a non-native audience, it could also be used to shape the minds and inform the natives of their own

[471] For Walter Ong's view see in Fielding, *Writing and Orality,* 17.
[472] Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 252.
[473] Walter Scott, "Henry Fielding," (1821) in *On Novelist and Fiction,* 46.

culture and past in an age of transformation.

Thus, according to Scott, the attraction of the historical novel was that it showed the reader a new aspect of the past: by going a century or two back and laying the scene in a remote and uncultivated district, all became new and startling in the present advanced, civilised period. There were Highland or Lowland manners, traditions, characters, scenery and superstitions; northern – mostly Scots - dialect and costume were described; the wars, the religion, and politics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, too, pleasantly strange. As Hazlitt, the famous literary critic of the time, put it, the object was to "give a charming and wholesome relief to the fastidious refinement and 'over-laboured lassitude' of modern readers, like the effect of plunging a nervous valetudinarian into a cold bath."[474]

Thus, as Scott described, history began to penetrate through the medium of romance, epic or historical novel into the popular mind and helped to construct the historical consciousness of a nation. This objective of the historical novel, that it instructed while entertaining the mind, was surely true for Galt as well as Scott. Hume commented likewise for the history books of his time: The "new breed of philosophic historians, erudite yet eager to create an intelligible, instructive and not least, entertaining past, presented in polished prose. The advantages found in history seem to be of three kinds:" it amuses the fancy, improves the understanding, and strengthens virtue.[475] So the didactic endeavour of Enlightenment thinkers was reflected in the aims of historical writing and perhaps as an outcome of this, created a popular form of historical writing,

[474] Hazlitt quoted in Costain, "Spirit of the Age," 162.
[475] Quoted in Porter, *Enlightenment,* 230.

the historical novel, whose intended audience was both the ordinary and the more intellectual readers of the time.

5.2 Mannerism and Propriety

Ideas about the refinement of manners and language contrasted considerably with Galt's hope to create a realistic presentation of manners and language. So it will be useful to look first at these ideas. The project of creating shared beliefs as well as improving contemporary taste and manners through literature was not new, but had its roots in the writings of early eighteenth-century English literati, as evidenced in their magazines. Foremost among these magazine editors were Addison and Steele who began the publication of the *Taitler* and *Spectator,* first in 1709-13. They were widely read in Scotland. Magazines were a chance for intellectuals as well as others to express their thoughts (most of the magazines had a column of readers' letters). In these writings a certain type of mannerism arose, where efforts were made to refine and develop society. This influenced the development of historical writing towards reflecting social and cultural issues and changes in a historical context.

The problem in Scotland had to do with the developing of fine manners and also the incorporation of Scotland culturally into a Britain which was dominated by England. In various publications, such as magazines and novels, new manners were encouraged as

well as a language free from Scotticisms. [476] Magazines were not only "commenting on the whole surge of change in society, but actively becoming a more and more important agent itself in that change."[477] In Scotland, a codified political discourse continued along with this English Enlightenment propaganda for a refinement of manners and tolerance. At that time the Jacobite threat created a distrust of folk culture in Scotland and the newly emerging manners and the promotion of a hierarchical and benevolent society fulfilled an attempt to control such a popular pro-Jacobite culture.[478]

Thus a project, similar to that in England, to improve manners by appealing to imagination and emotion was endorsed by Scottish Enlightenment writers such as Henry Mackenzie and Tobias Smollet. Like Addison and Steele, the Mirror Club, as Mackenzie, Smollet and their friends were called, created in *The Mirror* and *The Lounger* an image of polite culture. These promoted a philosophical view. It concerned itself with the personal and emotional aspects of moral action, and using some elements from the Scottish philosophical school like the nature of moral faculty, spoke of its relation to reason and feeling and its reliance on sympathy.[479] These journals were seen as a part of the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment and, as Knight notes, reflected "a derivative

[476] Joan Milne and Willie Smith, "The History of Scottish Literature," ed. Douglas Gifford, *The History of Scottish Literature*, Vol. 3 (4 vols. Aberdeen: University Press, 1988), 189; Charles A. Knight, "The Created World of the Edinburgh Periodicals," *Scottish Literary Journal* 6 (1979): 21-22.
[477] Milne and Smith, "History of Scottish Literature," 189.
[478] Murray G. H. Pittock, *Inventing and Resisting Britain: Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 101-03. See also, Paul Langford, *Walpole and the Robinocracy* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986), 16-17; Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989), 96; Peter Burke, *Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978, Aldershot, 1988), 270 and Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), v; Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy*, *the Tory Party 1714-60* (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 1982), 147, 286.
[479] For polite culture see Knight, "Edinburgh Periodicals," 20-36; David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People 1680-1830* (London: Chatto & Windus**,** 1961), 40-71; David Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: the Eighteenth-Century Experience* (London: Oxford Uni. Press, 1964), 68-87. For moral aspects of the novel see John Dwyer, "The Novel as Moral Preceptor," in *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1987), 141-67.

and genteel culture…The Edinburgh periodicals manifest the triumph of print over the spoken (and singing) voice."[480] The main content of the essays in the journals was related to morality either in the form of fables, essays and letters about the predicaments of modern life, where manners and morals were represented as codes of behaviour.[481] As Hume and Galt's minister of the *Annals*, as will be seen in the last chapter, observed there was a growing conviction that knowledge, humanity and industry were linked more and more together.[482]

Propagandist writings about refinement in manners and language in all aspects of life must have both influenced Scott's ideas about translation of the old into new and created Galt's resistance to such ideas. Now, Galt could be described as a mannerist, in the sense that he occupied himself most of the time, like Scott, in describing such trends, and he favoured the improvement of manners in existing conditions. However, there was another reality, which Galt acknowledged and which made him different. He believed that certain manners and diction were so much a part of the Scottish character that they could and should not be censored. So for him the case was the same in any historical endeavour. There might be times where characters and manners seem too vulgar for the contemporary reader to appreciate; but they had to be seen in the historical context as much as possible. He believed, contrary to the current trends, that a realistic representation was needed in a novel, especially a historical novel. He stated firmly: "if a character had coarseness an author must be coarse." This supposed firstly that characters

[480] Knight, "Edinburgh Periodicals," 22.
[481] René Wellek, *The Rise of English Literary History* (New York, London: McGraw-Hill Book, 1966), 49.
[482] Booth, "Scottish Vernacular Novel," 2; David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political and Moral* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1987), 277-80.

should be represented as naturally as possible even if their manners were coarse and lacked the metropolitan politeness (as the older members of the Pringle family, who go to London, expresedly show). History had to reflect the spirit of the time.[483]

Another area of literary endeavour that contributed not only to developing the refinement of manners, but tried to elevate sentiments, and which Galt perceived as the origins of his contemporary realistic novel, was the sentimental novel. It was written in the form of a philosophical tale, in which the story itself was secondary to the purpose of the philosophical in it.[484] Through the changes in thought of human mind and the related developments in psychology this genre, in contrast to romance, examined the development of the characters' emotions and sentiments, thus influencing the realism of the novel.[485]

The period of sentimentalist writing bridged the gap between the Enlightenment thinkers of the early 18th century (Hume, Addison, Steele etc.), and the Scottish writers of the early nineteenth century, such as Scott, Hogg, and Galt. Galt's attitude to this style is revealed in the introduction he wrote for the completed works of Mackenzie. He disagreed with most of his contemporaries that there should be a censure regarding manners and language; but he agreed with Mackenzie that propriety in presenting morals and sentiments was important. Galt thought that his work was one of the best examples of the genre of the sentimental novel and its role in refining manners, mind and emotions. The main editor of the *Mirror*, Mackenzie, published his novel, *The Man of Feeling*, in

[483] Galt, *Ringan Gilhaize or the Covenanters* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1995), 254.
[484] Frederick M. Keener, *The Chain of Becoming: The Philosophical Tale, the Novel, and a Neglected Realism of Enlightenment: Swift, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Johnson, and Austen.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 3, 7.
[485] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), 16.

1771. It was widely perceived as a history of manners. It was a sentimental story in which the hero, Hartley, possessed an ideal sensitivity, displayed as feelings of virtue, pity, sympathy and benevolence. As the story develops, the hero's innocent feelings and weaknesses are manipulated and exploited. The hero's response and the desired response in the reader of this book was the shedding of tears of sympathy and charity. Thus, the whole story constituted an ethical tale.

For Mackenzie, novels were a means of transmitting the propriety of manners and sentiments and merited a higher station than any other genre in the world of letters. He explained that "as [they contained] an interesting relation of events illustrative of the manners and characters of mankind" and that to write one that required judgement, taste and feeling, and that they also had an instructive purpose. Novels had and should have an instructive purpose. He continued: "Of youth it is essential to preserve the imagination sound as well as pure, and not to allow them to forget amidst the intricacies of sentiment, or the dreams of sensibility, the truths of Reason, or the laws of Principle."[486] Galt believed that the works of Mackenzie could thus be considered comparable to ethics. The moral message in writing was of the utmost importance, exceeding the value of the decorum. Like Mackenzie did in his essay in the *Mirror* Galt used Rousseau as a bad example. Accordingly, the French romances, with their "nudity in the delineations of love" were not acceptable for Scotland "at which the modest habits of this country would have revolted."

> Rousseau has added an exposure of those stronger aspirations of desire which constitute the basis of its animal instinct. Intelligent parents will regard the tales of Mr Mackenzie as calculated to refine and elevate the youthful heart… Delicacy is indeed the predominant quality of Mr Mackenzie's genius; it has not only led him to choose the most refined

[486] Mackenzie, Essay No 20, *The Lounger* (18 June 1785), pp. 77, 78, 86.

> view of his subject, but he never allows himself to rise beyond the prescribed propriety of the occasion.[487]

During the Enlightenment period writing involved the task of transmitting ethical values to the readers. All the eighteenth and early nineteenth century writers had always emphasized this aspect. Samuel Richardson argued that the novel had to convey information and moral reflections through the medium of a story.[488] The novel had fully and authentically to report human experience.[489] Indeed, Mackenzie himself referred to the aim of novels "as promoting a certain refinement of mind, they operated like all other works of genius and feeling, and have…more immediate tendency to produce it then most reader will find around him in the world."[490] This last characteristics, then, created a sense of realism that could not be found in romances.

According to Galt, what contributed to the truth of a representation was language itself. As mentioned before, in attempting to establish polite and developed manners in Scotland, language was one of the major themes of discussion. Language was connected to the question of manners, or assessing what was acceptable or not, This related partly to unionist political aspirations.[491] Scotland, perceived as a parochial and underdeveloped region compared to England, needed some polishing. John Clive rightly remarked that

> [e]arly nineteenth century provincialism meant more than mere distance from the capital. It meant, on the one hand, minds conscious of limited awareness, a sense of inferiority increased by the burden of an 'uncouth' accent which, in spite of heroic efforts to rid themselves of it, stuck to all but a few envied ones like a burr. On the other hand, it meant awareness and taunts; and led to a compensatory local patriotism, a stress on the real

[487] Mackenzie, "Introduction," 6, 7.
[488] James Leatham, *The Place of the Novel: An Undelivered Lecture* (Cottingham: the Cottingham Press, 1914), 1.
[489] Watt, *Rise of the Novel*, 32 and chapter 1 passim.
[490] Mackenzie, "Essay No 20:" 78.
[491] Fielding, *Writing and Orality*, 11.

> or imagined purity of native culture and tradition as against cosmopolitan sophistication, and to a justifiably strong sense of pride in Scottish economic advancement and the glories of the Scottish 'Renaissance'.[492]

As a result, among the Scottish literati, an urge to purify the language of Scotticisms arose. English was being perceived as the appropriate language for serious works. Lord Craig notes in the *Mirror* that Scots was the spoken language but a writer expressed himself in a language foreign to him "which he has acquired by study and observation."[493] John Home (an Oxford graduate), well representing most educated minds of his time, said "Eloquence in the Art of speaking is more necessary for a Scotchman than any body else as he lies under some disadvantage which [this] Art must remove."[494] As a matter of fact this reaction towards the spoken language as the medium of culture led to "particular blindness to the popular tradition."[495]

The issue of language, even in the thought of Galt, centred on what sort of language was acceptable and what was not. Galt believed that it was the most appreciable duty to attempt to reflect past manners and language as closely as possible. The problem of language and contemporary developments found reflection in Galt's work *Bogle Corbet*. Mr Macindoe had "learned to speak in a manner intelligible to Christians." Galt, in the same book, however, referred to another problem faced by the change of language. Boggle tried to give a description of how Mrs Possy wept after her husband went bankrupt "roaring and greeting I ought to call it, for the English language, affording no

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[492] John Clive, *Scotch Reviewers: The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1815* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1956), pp 18-19. For fuller discussion of the problem of Scottish provincialism in the eighteenth century see John Clive and Bernard Bailyn, "England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 11 (April 1954): 200-13.
[493] Cited in Knight, "Edinburgh Periodicals," 22.
[494] Quoted in Fielding, *Writing and Orality,* 21.
[495] Knight, "Edinburgh Periodicals," 22.

adequate phrase to describe it properly, obliges me to have recourse to the Scottish."[496] The civilising power of the past was in the development of history in stages, which certainly was not connected to the language used in these stages. Against the attitude of the time, Galt kept on, although often being criticised by Blackwood and his editors, writing in Scots because he saw it as an inseparable part of the Scottish common people and history. Unlike most of the authors of the time, such as Scott, the vernacular was an integral part of Galt's novels and his characters would be inconceivable without the Ayrshire speech.[497]

Readable literature in the vernacular could be found in native lyrics and epics, which were, as mentioned before, grist to the mill of the Scottish Enlightenment project to find the origins and manners of ancient societies. However, Scots, the native dialect or sister language of English, in the early nineteenth century was used more in poetry or in prose as a *jeux-d'esprit*.[498] Almost all publishers were suspicious of a novel written in dialect: it was a question of demand, whether or not it would interest anybody. Many authors used Scots not for adding idioms but for variety and decorative purpose, "spicing normal English paragraphs with an occasional phrase from the glossarial pepper-shaker;" or it was used as a comic device.[499] Civilization had become so associated with language that language became a basis for discriminating the refined and the civilized from the vulgar and the savage. So language itself came to be regarded as the subject of

[496] Galt, *Bogle Corbet ; or, The Emigrants* (London : n. g., 1831), 28, 230.
[497] He considered a small trip to Scotland as an opportunity to add to his vernacular vocabulary. Galt to W. Blackwood, Arundell, 23 June 1822, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4008, f. 183.
[498] Booth, "Scottish Vernacular Novel," 5.
[499] Ibid, 8 and Knight, *Edinburgh Periodicals*, 22.

improvement and Scots needed to be improved into polite Englishmen.[500] Henry Cockburn, a man of letters, remembered in the early nineteenth century that although in his childhood an English boy would be mocked for his accent, English became the language of polite society and a fashion. He noticed that Scots was falling out of use among the gentry with great speed, though not among common people. It became a fashion that richer Scottish boys were either sent to English schools or tutors were hired to eradicate their native accent. "Francis Horner was sent to study with the Reverend John Hewlett in Middlesex for two years, and Hewlett was pleased to inform his father, just before Horner returned to Edinburgh to read for the Scotch bar, that "the principle object for which your son came to England has been accomplished." He "got rid of the Scotch accent and pronunciation, and acquired the English so completely as not to be distinguished from a native."[501] Sir John Sinclair, a Scottish MP, made so clear in his *Observations on the Scottish Dialect*, 1782, that change of language would be "of use to my countrymen…particularly those whose object it is to have some share in the administration of national affairs." For those who wanted to improve themselves, "new manners must be assumed, and a new language adopted."[502] In 1823 the recently founded Edinburgh Academy also hired a master for English with a pure accent, meaning an English accent. Many both famous and ordinary Scots, because of the requirements of the

[500] Olivia Smith, *The Politics of Language 1791-1818* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), vii; also Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 18-22.
[501] All cited in Robert Stewart, *Henry Brougham, 1778-1868: His Public Career* (London: The Bodley Head, 1986), 24.
[502] Sinclair quoted in Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, 24-5, 26. Likewise, James Elphinston wrote a whole volume on the Scottish Dialect, *Propriety Ascertained in Her Picture* (1786-87).

age started to take lessons to change their speech patterns, and even magazines published English Synonymy, listing English replacements for Scottish words.[503]

Galt seemed to agree with those who believed that English translations of works written in Scots would not give the same effect or meaning.[504] As Galt aimed to create an authentic description of the society, he tried to give also a clear description of its language: so much so that on one occasion before he started to write, he was happy to be able to go back to Scotland for a while in order to freshen up his dialect.[505] The verisimilitude of Galt, described in the first chapter, created a disdain among his critics. His characters' manners and the use of Scots for an audience of the Edinburgh gentility appeared to be too crude.[506] His language was perceived as old-fashioned. The Scottish Augustans had established the polite culture that saw Anglicisation in speech as correctness.[507] It was a derided aspect of Galt's work that many of his contemporaries did not like: Jeffrey interpreted many of his works as vulgar.[508] However, it was Galt's use of language that gave his characters the true manners of their social and educational level, reflecting the degree to which they had been exposed to the world (how much they had travelled etc.).

The language used by Galt in his works, beyond helping to develop understanding of the minds and manners of the characters, reflected the characters' place in the social strata, defined by attitudes about language and civility. There were those who could

[503] See for example a series of articles called "Contributions to English Synonymy," *The Monthly Review* 34 (August 1812).
[504] Wellek, *Literary History,* 82 and see John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 48-49 and Ibid., vol. 1, 384-85.
[505] Galt to Blackwood, 23 June 1822, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4008, ff. 182-83,
[506]Olivia Smith, *Politics of Language*, vii; see also Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, 18-22.
[507] W. Ashton, "Regional Realism in Four Novels By John Galt" (Master's Thesis, The University of Guelph, 1979), 72.
[508] See chapter 1.

afford to be taught English pronunciation and those who could not. As one might expect, in Galt's novels the lower classes or the less educated preserved their local language to a greater extent than the educated. Likewise the older people were more likely to use Scots and Scotticisms, and the further back in history the narrative went, the use of Scots became heavier. So, the more traditional and conservative people, being more closely attached to their local traditions, preferred to use Scots.[509] The *Ayrshire Legatees* is the work that best exemplifies Galt's use of language and epitomizes how this characters perceived the changes in the language. Booth remarked: "Galt's reportorial accuracy in transcribing speech patterns strengthens the impression of the historical fidelity which he sought and on which he so prided himself."[510] Galt promised Blackwood to make the characters of the *Ayrshire Legatees* as "true in the descriptions and the characters" as he could do, being sure that these characters and their observations would be recognizable to Blackwood's Ayrshire readers.[511]

The manners of the characters frame the structure of the works, but do not interfere much with the historical events portrayed as they are only eye witnesses. However, by representing them without a cultural translation, it was possible to observe some of the ancient forms of contemporary manners as well as allowing the history flow in its natural stream. Galt believed that he was giving the reader a pure history in terms of

[509] Derrick J. McClure, "Scots in Dialogue: Some Uses and Implications," *Scots and Its Literature* (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing, 1995), 87. For the use of Scots see also Manfred Gorlach, ed., *Focus on: Scotland* (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing, 1985); on the complexity of language and nation relationship in Scotland, see Janet Sorensen, *The Grammar of Empire In Eighteenth-Century British Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[510] Booth, "Scottish Vernacular Novel," 9.
[511] Galt to Blackwood, London, 31 July 1820, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4005, ff. 89-90 and Galt to

manners, characters, mentalities and language. In a sense, he believed that he portrayed history as it was. He described his characters:

> It may be necessary to explain here, that I do not think the character of my own productions has been altogether rightly regarded. Merely because the incidents are supposed to be fictitious, they have been all considered as novels, and yet, as such, the best of them are certainly deficient in the peculiarity of the novel, they would be more properly characterised, in several instances, as theoretical histories, than either as novels or romances. A consistent fable is as essential to a novel as a plot is to a drama, and yet those, which are deemed my best productions, are deficient in this essential ingredient. For example, in the *Annals of the Parish*, there is nothing that properly deserves to be regarded as a story; for the only link of cohesion, which joins the incident together, is the mere remembrance of the supposed author, and nothing makes the work complete within itself, but the biographical recurrence upon the scene, of the same individuals. It is, in consequence as widely different from a novel, as a novel can be from any other species of narrative."[512]

Galt emphasized his realism in his narrative. He constructed his stories in such a way that they were told by eyewitnesses.[513] Eyewitnesses presented truths from first hand experience. Eye witness testimony played an important role in Galt's use of auto-biographical narrative. His autobiographical narration led both to a sense of historical realism as well as a deviation from it in his work, as we shall see in the next section. Like Gibbon, he does not follow Hume's ideal of detachment, which might have come with the use of the third person. He regretted the use of third-person voices in his book the *Last of the Lairds* and concluded: "instead of an autobiography I was induced to make it a narrative, and in this respect it lost that appearance of truth and nature which is in my opinion, the great charm of such works."[514] Ringan Gilhaize was not written in hindsight like Scott's novels, or as a narrative expressed in the third person, but from the

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Blackwood, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4005, f. 82-83.

[512] *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 219.

[513] He found, for example, *Adam Blair* insufficient, as it could have been more striking if it would have been told in the first person. Galt to Moir, London, 14 March 1822, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4008, f

perspective of a narrator who does not yet know yet the outcome of the political events that he is witnessing. It is thus suggested that history is not something that has already been done in the past, but rather something always continuing. Certainly, in speaking of these events, he borrowed from stories that he heard as a boy from old eyewitnesses.[515] He himself was an eyewitness of a transitional period in Scotland and in his choice of historical sources he put emphasis on finding eyewitnesses of the referred period, such as his use of Cavendish for *Ringan Gilhaize*.

5.3 Authorial Voice and Historical Source

There are grand historical narratives, like Scott's depictions of the Stewarts creating a narrative of identity. Galt, however, depicts less dominant characters, ordinary Scottish people. They were non-heroes who told their own stories. He achieved this by writing in the first person, giving voices to these characters, with their own personal perceptions and prejudices. By doing so, it seems that the narrative tells a true story, pointing to many true versions of stories and histories. This, according to Galt, was history as it was. It was history according to his historical character, penetrating his thoughts and going directly to the bosom of the nation. In a sense, it epitomized Galt's historical verisimilitude, as opposed to Scott's cultural translation into present manners. This disconnection with the translation of manners, traditions and language into their present forms was achieved by

167.
[514] *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 270.

Galt's use of the voice of the characters who, most of the time, were simple members of the nation, without any title and special higher education, but instead leading a common, everyday life. A biased narrator led the reader into the spirit of the time better than an omniscient one. Balwhidder, the minister of the *Annals*, always talks about what is happening around him, mentions the French Revolution, industrial development, sometimes not understanding what it really is or what its impact is, but aware that something is going on.

Galt based his portrayal of a certain period on both eyewitness accounts and his choice of historical sources. For instance, he consulted Cavendish about the seventeenth-century because he was an eyewitness and Richard Fiddes, an eighteenth century apologist of Cardinal Wolsey, aided his accuracy in speaking about the Battle of Pavia.[516] He wrote in 1822 to Blackwood, asking him for various kinds of books such as the life of Alexander Pedes and requesting that he "procure as many of the old Ralph Erskine sort of books" as he could find.[517] Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* was another comprehensive source. It was written in the third person, consisting of the two previously written works, the *History* and the *Life,* which were written during his two exiles. Clarendon believed that the greater part of the history of the civil wars took place during his own lifetime. According to him, the Civil Wars resulted from successive problems with the same issue, namely whose power and continuity would prevail: parliament's or the king's. Galt was, in this sense, also interested in continuity. A major part of his histories surrounded the question of which tradition, Presbyterian Lowland, Stewart Highland or the absentee king's Erastianism, should prevail. This

[515] *Autobiography,* vol. 1, 9-11.
[516] *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 72.

question appeared successively through different generations in his novels *Ringan Gilhaize* and *the Annals*.

As mentioned before, Galt's history shows his interest in both change and a search for the origin of certain convictions and habits. These histories of origins were related to the present through the various generations. In his works, this metaphoric relationship was applied in his *Ringan Gilhaize*. It tells the story of the Covenanters through the voice of a Covenanter during the late seventeenth-century tumult in Scotland. His memoirs were connected to his grandfather's experiences, as he lived long enough to include and tell the whole story of Scottish Presbyterianism starting from the early days of the Reformation to his grandson. Galt thus goes back into history by the use of the generational relationship between his narrator and his narrator's grandfather, in order to find the origin of Scottish culture that lay, he held in Scottish Calvinism, no matter how bloody its history was. Cullum Brown has asserted for Galt, as for modern historians, religion in Scotland has had an important bearing on national consciousness. For a people whose "sense of nationhood was removed early in the eighteenth century, religion remained one of the few facets of Scottish civil life in which a collective identity could survive."[518]

The metaphor of generation, as argued at length by present-day literary historian Brown, has been a common method of depicting in the narration the development and change in a society. Generation both symbolised the cumulative experience of the members of a nation and the background or ancient form and character of a nation. As Brown points out, this experience was conveyed through the narrations of traditions from

[517] Galt to Blackwood, London 19th December 1822, EUL, Galt Letters, La II 422/105.
[518] Cullum Brown cited in David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: the Sociology of a Nation* (London:

one generation to the next, containing both descriptions of events and the personal convictions of the author. This passing on of traditions by the author, intentionally or un-intentionally, consisted both of a description of what was, and of a translation of the "what was" into a new culture. Brown calls this translation a deviation from truth and gives its sources as "the infidelity of memory, or the exaggerations of vanity."[519] The choice of "what was" becomes necessarily very important. The choice determined how courageous, wise, suppressed and suffering the nation or members of the nation were.

Like many other authors Galt had to deal with the choice and representation of the past within this dichotomy. It was one that left the subject between a progressive, futuristic history and a nostalgic, romantic description of the past; between a romantic style and a pure realistic reflection of the past. As Lindsay, another modern literary historian, pointed out for Scott:

> On the one hand Scott's appreciation of the romantic past led him to steep his imaginative faculties and his antiquarian talents in the heroic or anti-heroic drama of Scotland's history. On the other, his inherently common-sense nature made him support the industrial changes that came with the Union, and which he realised were inevitable [as an inevitable part of stadialism].[520]

In the early nineteenth century, Scott as well as Galt, both being to some extent the products of Enlightenment, were interested in the creative past treasures of Scotland and spread those by a tint of emphasis on progress. It is said for Scott that he suggested that "traditional Highland society contains savage and primitive elements that must be left behind as modern civilisation advances, but that it also contains features that could

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Routledge, 2001), 55-56
[519] See chapter 1 in Brown, *Institutions*, 14.
[520] Margaret Lindsay, *History of Scottish Literature* (London: Robert Hale, 1992), 276.

serve Britain well, once the Highlanders are re-educated for the modern world and their loyalty is harnessed to the imperial cause."[521] As Galt's and Scott's rhetoric was connected to the formation of national manners, this was a compromise between the old and new, progressive changes. Although it may sound contradictory, it was a celebration of civic and commercial values as well as a selection of elements from the undesirable, undeveloped past, i.e. some of the precious pieces valuable for the nation's being and future.[522] This was given in a history by making connections between the past and present.

This point may aid in understanding that in the historical novel of the period there was a flux of history and development depicted and an emphasis placed on experience. To re-emphasise, the use of generations and memory as a leitmotif clung to their historical narrative. Generational relationship to the past had not only an importance of connecting the present to the past but also had a crucial role as a source.[523] The previous generation becomes a source for history, or the means to acquire knowledge about the past, that is to say, the memories of the older generation serve as a source for past habits, manners and beliefs learned through story telling; this hereby also epitomizing the importance of authority. Authority is that which legitimises a narrative, a history, a government or a revolt. Historical sources such as eyewitnesses could help the narrator assume an authentic and authoritative voice. Previous generations served as authentic

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[521] Mack Douglas, "James Hogg in 2000 and Beyond," *Romanticism On the Net* 19 (August, 2000), <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/19mack.html>, 05.03.2002, 4.

[522] For example Scott used the Jacobites and medieval past to create a cultural nationalism. See Anthony Lake, "'Chapter Three: A Beautiful and Fantastic Piece of Frostwork:' Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe and Medievalism," in *Patriotic and Domestic Love: Nationhood and National Identity in British Literature 1789-1848* (Ph. D. diss., University of Sussex, 1997).

[523] Mathew Campbell and Jacqueline M. Labbe, eds., *Memory and Memorials 1789-1914: Literary and Cultural Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1-4. They explain the great use of memory as history and close connections to historicism in the nineteenth century.

eyewitness sources and transmitted through the ear-witnesses to the collective memories to the following generation.

In the *Annals*, for example, Galt noted that events and characterisations were based on actual events that happened about that time in Ayrshire and had been established as oral stories: "characteristic of the garrulous humour of the old doited author, and the others are such events as are long remembered in the country parishes."[524] Furthermore, authority encapsulated in a sequence of generational narrative allowed acceptance and legitimisation of certain beliefs transmitted through them.

Genealogical sequence in history helped to legitimise royal authority or the institution of the church, or verify the authenticity of a certain document. This metaphoric way of thinking about causal relationships was often used for referring to any event or representation from a prior reality. As Brown pointed out "this relationship between event and subsequent event or author and text is understood as an assumed analogy with the sexual generation of offspring by parents." The analogy implies an inheritance of authority, a force that allows the same authority to be reproduced; or in Voltaire's words, "the past gives birth to the present." This connection also implies a mystification of authority accomplished by the narrators' deviation from the truth, increasing as the number of narrators from generation to generation. As this process proceeds through various generations, it continually bears the same a degree of legitimacy in various forms. This same process of legitimisation — as Scott thought as the major role of romance and

[524] Galt to Blackwood, London, 27 February 1821, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4006, ff. 223-24.

historical novel — led to the construction of culture in its variety. Narrators become the painters of national manners and culture.[525]

The author was and is the individual who composes or relates a certain story but the narrator only was able to confirm and continue history by referential story-telling to and by following generations. To use Hume's anti-Jacobite remarks, legitimisation was not just a procedure depending on the past but was connected to posterity. In history, on the throne, it is only those with a legitimate authority who had successors.

> Princes often seem to acquire a right from their successors, as well as from their ancestors; and a king, who during his life-time might justly be deem'd an usurper, may well be regarded by posterity as a lawful prince, because he has had the good fortune to settle his family on the throne, and entirely change the ancient form of government … Time and custom give authority to all forms of government, and all successions of princes; and that power, which at first was founded only on injustice and violence, becomes in time legal and obligatory. Not does the mind rest there; but returning back upon its footsteps, transfers, as being related together and united in the imagination.[526]

Thus, as much as authority legitimised a power, the authority itself was in need of and dependent on social recognition. This question of authority becomes a major one in the fields of politics, history and scripture study. This confrontation was present in all its forms in Galt's writings. He was of the opinion that the historical process of legitimising authority was not rational but subjective, dependent on sentiments, as Hume asserted. To believe in an authority was subjective, it was related to conventions of the time, the condition in which a certain individual or state was in and also on one's education – either traditional or formal.

[525] Brown, *Institutions*, 86.

Authority or the creation of an authority rested on the creation of a common consciousness. As Scott and Burke asserted, it needed to assimilate minds into a new mode of thought and to bring together like-minded men.[527] This procedure, together with the subjectivity of certain choices made up a nation's identity. The choice of accepting certain establishments among different nations created their distinctiveness and thus their identity. Galt's writings, seen from within such a view gain an importance in the creation of a Scottish history. They accept the flow of history and change of perceptions, but emphasis at the same time the past as an authority for establishing a national consciousness. According to Galt, the sources of power that have been accepted do change in time, in stages, and it is not possible to ignore previous stages.

> The restraints alluded to take the names of usages, customs and laws which the development of circumstances regulate and modify. No two epochs in respect to them are exactly alike. [528]

As stated above, the power possessed by certain authorities might change over the ages. A good example is the authority of the Bible in the life of an individual and more specifically a belief in Special Providence. The concept of Special Providence is central in Galt's historical writing, especially in *Ringan Gilhaize* when compared to his descriptions of eighteenth-century Scottish society. It is the authority of the Scripture accompanied with the strong belief in Special Providence that guided Ringan during his most difficult times. This same trend was apparent in *The Entail* where Walkinshaw, the

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[526] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), 566.
[527] See at the beginning of this chapter for Scott. Burke said that "an individual becomes a part of a people by sharing in these opinions, by adapting his behaviour to fit the pattern imposed by the opinions prevalent in his community and by accepting the manners, morals, and institutions religious social and political that are consequently of the society's shared beliefs." Burke cited in George J. Graham, "Edmund Burke's 'Developmental Consensus'," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 16 (February 1972): 31.
[528] John Galt, "Free Trade Question, Letter I to Oliver Yorker, Esq." *Fraser's Magazine* (November 1832):

main character, sought refuge by opening the Bible at random, by which he could make a psychological connection to his present condition. Nevertheless, history discloses how men moved from the belief that they were guided by Special Providence to the assertion that there were many reasons and forces in human life that made individuals act in certain ways. The authority of the Scripture as a guide, such as Ringan's practice of opening the Bible at random faded away, as other sources began to be consulted in addition to the Bible.

It is true that there was a shift towards a more rational or psychological explanation during Galt's own period. However, in the seventeenth century, men like Ringan believed in Special Providence and the curative powers of the Scripture. They submitted their common consciousness to this authority, which they inherited from their ancestors who told them how they had fought for their independence in the seventeenth century, in the name of Providence, against Charles II and James II. This idea was accepted and handed down to the following generation. Posterity, however, with contemporary developments, changed some of the stories' emphasis, added later experiences to their mental world, and went into another stage of history.

Galt's description of the belief in Special Providence was found less frequently in his writings about society in later times. In *Bogle Corbet*, which is about the life and character of a Canadian settler in the eighteenth century, the hero was controlled "by many vicissitudes and sudden haps and surprising chances." The reader comes across Special Providence in *Lawrie Todd*, a colonist in America in the late eighteenth century, however, in a different way. Here in the main character, Lawrie Todd, the belief in Special Providence was reflected as an arrogant characteristic. Lawrie Todd showed the

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existence of old and new beliefs at the same time and the decline of old beliefs. In Galt's writings in his own person, it was the General Providence that was regarded as governing history, just as the Special Providence was in the seventeenth century. Galt sympathetically took sides with Bogle Corbet who believed that his life was uncontrollably under the influence of "many vicissitudes – and sudden haps and surprising chances." Bogle had a strong faith too, but with more inclinations towards General Providence. "I felt a strong hand" he said explaining his motive for moving to Canada "pushing me on to emigrate."[529] Faith is very important for Bogle and his only guide in destitute times. Lawrie Todd's Special Providence became a selfish notion, a "rugged individualist" belief.[530]

This offers a good example of Galt's treatment and perception of variation in the sources of knowledge and inspiration in different periods. It is a fact that historical knowledge and 'scientific' reasoning gained a greater role in everyday life in the eighteenth century, compared to the seventeenth century. This he makes clear with *Ringan Gilhaize* himself. Whenever he is not sure about something, or he needs advice or some knowledge he refers to the Bible as his main source. The divine source is the only one that can tell the truth, can show the path to be taken and cure the wounds of the material world. However, this became a matter of great controversy in eighteenth-century discussions. Human beings needed historical knowledge, however, when dealing with past societies that upheld beliefs like Special Providence. It should then have a respected place in their history and not merely be judged.

[529] Galt, *Bogle Corbet*, 8, 173.
[530] Ashton, "Regional Realism," 66.

Galt's conviction, similar to the general Christian orthodoxy of his time, was that the hand of Providence guided all events and happenings but not so far as to imply the diminution of individual responsibility in the historic drama altogether. Since the secondary duty of the novelist or historian lay in the description and construction of culture, it was important to Galt that changes and continuities should take place in accordance with the values upheld during his own days. The flow of events and the representation of events as they were, were of great importance to Galt. This he tried to communicate with the help of the metaphor of generations. The generations became both the actors in history as well as the transmitters of history to the present as historical authorities. The relationship of previous generations to the later ones gave authority to their transmission. What they transmitted was the spirit of an age, as the actors showed what was important for them, what they believed, how they had changed and how they handed the history down to the present. In this there appears a great difference between Scott and Galt. There was contrast between Scott's translation of past cultures into present manners and Galt's, so to say, historicism or verisimilitude. These two different approaches to historiography relate also to the popular conservatism that did not exclude progressivism. This is spoken of in the last chapter. The minds of the popular readership were receptive to this generational transmitting of stories and traditions. They, like Galt, grew up with the heroic stories of the Covenanters, superstitions and biblical traditions which were a part of daily life in Lowland Scotland. Certainly, there had been a change. However, in opposition to the liberal's rational belief in the possibility of a rationally determined and determining direction of history, they believed in a stadialist history where the Providence still exercised its influence in a progressive direction, but without

condemning their traditional attitudes. This different choice, however, becomes more obvious and striking considering belief in natural law, connected to the law of heterogeneity, which will be discussed in the next chapter. This academic and philosophical explanation of history could find an easy reflection in popular novels and histories, as it had already been utilized in their composition.

CHAPTER 6

THE COVENANT REVISITED: ENTHUSIASM, CHOICE AND INEVITABILITY

Their constancy in torture and in death,-
These on Tradition's tongue still live, these shall
On History's honest page be pictured bright
To latest times.
Galt, *Ringan*, "Graham's Sabbath"

During the eighteenth century the number of historical writings published about the seventeenth century was disappointingly small and such works tended to endorse the view that the Scots of that period were especially narrow-minded and blood thirsty. There were certainly a few historians who countered such preconceptions, with what could be called a revisionist history, such as David Hume and William Robertson. During the early nineteenth century, writing about pre-1750 Scottish history, which was fostered by Walter Scott's popular novels, gained momentum. As Marinell Ash points out, several historical texts were published and historical societies were established, such as the Roxburghe, the Abbotsford and the Maitland. However, most of these publications and interest grew substantially out of the eighteenth-century tradition of editing primary sources, also called the *érudits*.[531] A disposition to study the past for its own sake was rising: "David Hume pointed the way, Edmund Burke provided the philosophical

[531] See Marinell Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: Ramsey Head Press, 1980), ch. 3; Robert J. Hale, ed., *The Evolution of British Historiography: From Bacon to Namier* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 29-30.

accompaniment, and Sir Walter Scott provided the romantic nostalgia."[532] The popularisation of the historical novel offered a lively format to readers and both informed and helped to construct a national and historical consciousness, and phenomenon discussed in the last chapter.

6.1 *Ringan Gilhaize* and *Old Mortality*

This chapter deals with such a construction: John Galt's reactionary history influenced by contemporary visions, especially Walter Scott's interpretation of the Covenanters.[533] Galt argued that an understanding of this period cannot be divorced from the Covenanters' theological premises, particularly their belief that the bond of the Covenant was scripturally determined. Galt's *Ringan Gilhaize* was an important attempt to describe a Covenanter's mind in a sympathetic manner. One of Galt's correspondents was of the opinion that "the whole work breathes the mind and enthusiasm of the broken remnant of the old Covenanters."[534] It portrayed a principled and faithful mind pushed to the edge to react against authority and presents the Covenanters and their enthusiasm as an inevitability.

Although *Ringan Gilhaize* was not appreciated in its own time, it has recently gained much praise, especially in academic circles.[535] In the latest edition, issued in 1995,

[532] R. W. Harris, *Romanticism and the Social Order 1780-1830* (London: Blandford Press, 1969), 11.
[533] Covenanters also appear as a comic device. For example see "Dr Ulrick Sternstare's First Letter On the National Character of the Scots," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (December 1818): 328-30.
[534] Alan Cunningham to Galt, 6 June 1823, London, NLS, Miscellaneous, MS 621, f. 3.

Patricia J. Wilson introduces the novel as "a splendid example of realistic folk history."[536] The novel did not receive much attention when it was published; but Galt, certain about its value, stated in 1834 that "whatever may be the blindness of the present age, thank God there will be a posterity"[537] – and was quite right about this. Nowadays, as Patricia Wilson remarked, it is hard to say that the novel is "neglected."[538] It became common to compare Galt's *Ringan* to Walter Scott's *Old Mortality*. In the 1899 edition George Douglas remarked that "Galt laid bare the soul of the Covenanting movement [which]… Scott in *Old Mortality* most signally failed to do," and later on, Ian Jack, the literary critic, said that there was: "a technical expertise or sophistication about *Ringan Gilhaize* which is seldom to be found in Scott."[539] More recently, Ian Gordon noted that Galt achieved "the most sympathetic recreation in literature of the harshly independent, dour yet admirable spirit of Scottish Calvinism."[540]

The comparisons to Scott were initiated by Galt himself. Galt stated in his *Literary Life* that *Ringan Gilhaize* was, like James Hogg's stories about the Covenanters, a reaction to Scott's *Old Mortality*.[541] He was of the opinion that Scott had mistreated the

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[535] For more see Chapter 1.

[536] John Galt, "Introduction," by Patricia J. Wilson, in *Ringan Gilhaize, or the Covenanters* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1995), vii; and Wilson, "*Ringan Gilhaize*: The Product of an Informing Vision," *Scottish Literary Journal* 8 (May 1981): 52-68.

[537] John Galt, *Literary Life and Miscellanies of John Galt*, vol. 1 (2 vols. Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1834), 258. This blindness is also referred with regret in the Review of "*Ringan Gilhaize* and *The Spaewife*," *The British Critic* (New Series) (March 1824): 233-44.

[538] Patricia J. Wilson, "*Ringan Gilhaize* – A Neglected Masterpiece?" *John Galt 1770-1979*, ed. C. A. Whatley (Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 1979), 148.

[539] Sir George Douglas, "Introduction," in John Galt, *Ringan Gilhaize; or the times of the Covenanters*, ed. Sir George Douglas (London, 1899); Ian Jack, *English Literature 1815–1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 231.

[540] Ian A. Gordon, *John Galt: the Life of a Writer* ((Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1972). Francis Russell Hart comments likewise on Galt's characters' realism, *The Scottish Novel: A Critical Survey* (London: J. Murray, 1978), 50.

[541] For a comparative study of Hogg, Scott and Galt see James Hogg, "Introduction," in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, ed. D. Mark (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Academic Press, 1976); Robert Hay Carnie, "Scottish Presbyterian Eloquence and *Old Mortality*," *Scottish Literary Journal: A Review of Studies in Scottish Language and Literature* 3 (2) (1976): 51-61 and Douglas S. Mack, "'The Rage of Fanaticism in

Covenanters: he "treated the defenders of the Presbyterian Church with too much levity, and not according to my impressions derived from the history of that time." He continued that he was actually surprised by Scott's disinterest, since some of Scott's descendants had suffered during those "killing times" as well:

> The descendants of Scott of Harden, who was fined in those days forty thousand pounds Scots for being a Presbyterian, or rather for countenancing his lady for being so, should [not] have been so forgetful of what was due to the spirit of that epoch, as to throw it into what I felt was ridicule.[542]

Galt, probably like most of the Lowland families, had relatives who were also proscribed and sent to Carolina for refusing to call the affair of Bothwell Bridge a rebellion. In his *Literary Life* Scott's depiction of the Covenanters was as bigoted, arbitrary and cruel.[543] In contrast, Galt's portrayal is more understanding of the Covenanting position. He explained:

> I have supposed a Covenanter relating the adventures of his grandfather, who lived during the Reformation. It was therefore necessary that I should conceive distinctly what a Covenanter would think of a Reformer in the church … There was here, if I may be allowed the expression, a transfusion of character that could only rightly be understood by showing how a Reformer himself acted and felt in the opinion of a Covenanter.[544]

As a result Galt's portrait is more sympathetic to the Covenanters. However, Scott's interpretation still carried the greater weight among the popular perceptions of that period.

Former Days:' James Hogg' *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and the Controversy over *Old Mortality*," in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction: Critical Essays*, ed. Ian Campbell (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1979), 37-50.

[542] Galt, *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 254. Galt made some of his characters in *The Ayrshire Legatees* and *The Steam-Boat* articulate similar thoughts on Scott's hostile attitude towards the Presbyterian cause and the Covenanters. *The Ayrshire Legatees; or, the Pringle Family* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1978), 6; *The Steam-Boat* (Edinburgh and London, 1822), 318.

[543] The seventeenth-century Presbyterians were depicted by generations of historians as martyrs, fanatics or a mixture of the two. Elizabeth Hannan Hyman, "A Church Militant: Scotland, 1661–1690," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (Spring, 1995): 49.

Old Mortality is the story of the campaign in 1679 of James Graham of Claverhouse against the Covenanters. The story is put into the mouth of "Old Mortality," an aged witness of the Covenanting times, who devoted himself to travelling the land, making sure that the Covenanters' tombstones were still legible. Henry Morton of Milnwood, the main character, is a moderate Presbyterian, largely uninvolved in the conflict — until arrested for giving shelter to his father's friend, John Burley of Balfour, unaware that he was involved in the murder of Archbishop Sharpe of St. Andrews. Morton, sentenced to death, is saved by the intervention of Lord Evandale, his rival for the hand of Edith Bellenden. Evandale's service is repaid, by Morton's rescue of his life, not once, but twice. Much distressed by the oppressive behaviour of the government forces towards innocent Presbyterians, Morton joins the Covenanters, with some hope of having a moderating influence upon them. Evandale saves Morton again after the Covenanters' defeat at Bothwell Brig; but now Morton is sent into exile. Edith, believing him dead, is about to marry Evandale. In fact, Morton has now returned, but decides not to interfere with the wedding. However, learning of a plot to ambush Evandale by a fanatical Covenanter, he tries to rescue him, unsuccessfully. Evandale sanctions Morton and Edith's marriage before he dies.

Scott's attempt can be read as a condemnation of religious zealotry. He appears, like his hero Morton, as balanced, as a moderate. Nevertheless, he demonstrates an underlying pro-Stuart attitude, which, he held, was an important element in the Scot's identity. He reflected and sentimentalised in *Old Mortality*, what John Snodgrass in his thesis describes as "an orphaned Jacobite loyalty", which was more overt in Scott's

[544] *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 250-51.

works about the eighteenth-century Jacobites.[545] What is even more noticeable is that his main characters, Morton, Evandale and Claverhouse, were given a noble and decidedly chivalrous character. Morton is hardly to be seen as having much religious motivation for his acts. Rather, he is concerned to right the wrongs done to the poor and innocent. His devotion to the fair Edith he has in common with the loyal and respectful Evandale. Claverhouse, too, is a character from the realms of chivalry, the obedient and loyal servant of his king. Such decidedly Romantic themes, if nothing else, distance Scott's treatment of the Covenanters very considerably from that of Galt.

Galt's different point of view from Scott is especially revealed by the characters he chose for his history: by their convictions, language and personality.[546] His characters suggest a more sympathetic position although his contemporary ideas were still very antagonistic to theirs. Although most of his characters in the novel are not explored in depth and not developed, except for Ringan himself, the ministers that Galt chose are, in contrast to Scott's bigoted ones, gentle spiritual leaders who create a sort of noble stereotype.

The point just made may be exemplified with particular reference to the figure of Claverhouse. Galt's description is similar to that drawn by Thomas M'Crie, a minister of the Anti-Burger communion, for whom Claverhouse was a "wild animal."[547] M'Crie claimed that Scott had softened the character of Claverhouse in an attempt to "hold up to

[545] John C. J Snodgrass, *Narrating Nations, Negotiating Borders: The Scottish Romantic Novel in Blackwood's Circle* (Ph.D. diss., Texas A&M University, 1999), p. iii.
[546] For a thorough analysis of Walter Scott's, James Hogg's and Galt's Covenanter characters and language, see Emma Letley, "Hogg, Scott, Galt and the Covenanters," in *From Galt to Douglas Brown: Nineteenth-Century Fiction and Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988), 28–47.
[547] Thomas M'Crie (ed.), *Life of Thomas M'Crie* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1840), 220.

admiration, the worst of their persecutors."[548] Whereas in *Ringan* Galt uses descriptions such as "bluidy Clavers", and suggests that Claverhouse was an exterminating angel, aloof from the Covenanters and unable to understand them. Scott on the other hand depicts him as a worthy, noble man, although not squeamish when he shows his ruthlessness.[549] Ringan saw Claverhouse as a wicked soldier able "to put to the sword whomsoever he found with arms at any preaching in the fields," burning "in his military pride," and a revengeful figure (*Ringan*, 341, 347). Scott gives Claverhouse a far more developed and humane personality. When he is seen at his most "fiery and vindictive," the reader is led to see this in relation to his personal grief and persuaded not to judge too harshly. (*Old Mortality*, chapter XVI, 171) Scott's work is heavily weighted in favour of the Royalists and Henry Morton, the main character in *Old Mortality*. Although Scott makes some attempt to be fair to the Covenanters, asking the reader to recognise the "devoted courage" of a "few hundred peasants," this courage is not given a strong voice in the text. (*Old Mortality*, 243) Claverhouse claims the Scottish Covenanters "in arms for furthering the covenanted work of reformation," as rebels "un-derserving the name of either of Scotchmen or of subject." (*Old Mortality*, 133, 167)

One of the most extreme Covenanters is Old Mause, an old domestic servant to Lady Margaret Bellenden, the Royalist heroine in Scott's novel. Old Mause is uncompromising and rude and even causes the dismissal of her own son, Cuddie, from Tillietudlem and later on responsible for the arrest of Morton and his son. (*Old Mortality*, 69-75, 85-90) In a letter to Robert Southey, Scott said that she was drawn with the animus he reserved for "the beastly covenanters" who "hardly had any claim to be called

[548] Thomas M'Crie, in *Miscellaneous Writings: Chiefly Historical*, ed. T. M'Crie (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1841), 247.

men, unless what was founded on their walking upon their hind feet. You can hardly conceive the perfidy, cruelty, and stupidity of these people, according to the accounts they have themselves preserved."[550] Cuddie, like Morton himself, is neither an extreme Covenanter nor a Royalist, but he is unwillingly drawn into the conflicts of his time by his mother's aggressive interference and later his loyalty to Morton. (*Old Mortality*, 92, 228) Morton's interest in the Covenant first starts off as a humane feeling and progresses as he hopes to moderate the cruelty of the Covenanters. (*Old Mortality*, 156, 215-8) His words explains his position:

> It is most infamous and intolerable oppression!…Here is a poor peaceable fellow, whose only motive for joining the conventicle was a sense of filial piety, and he is chained up like a thief or murderer, and likely to die the death of one, but without the privilege of a formal trial, which our laws indulge to the worst malefactor! Even to witness such tyranny, and still more to suffer under it is enough to make the blood of the tamest slave boil within him. (*Old Mortality*, 153-4)

Thus the providential cause and the Covenant seems to play only a minor place in the actions of the seventeenth century in Scott's history. In contrast to Galt's emphasis on the Reformed faith, Covenant and divine right of resistance, Scott's history exposes the Covenanter's actions as cruel, unprincipled, spontaneous and roughly political.

6.2 Inevitability and Historicism

While writing his novel, Galt corresponded with Lady Blessington, a lover of his works, telling her that he began to write a story that covers a little more than a century, as it "comprehends" three generations. He continued, saying that it dealt with many issues

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[549] Walter Scott, *Old Mortality* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons: 1948), 39, 102, 127, 119-20.
[550] Scott to Robert Southey, 15 December 1807, *Life of Scott*, Vol. 2, 134 quoted in M'Crie, "Introduction

similar to *Old Mortality* and that it did not have a dramatic plot within itself. He said "the style I have chosen is that grave, cool, and in some degree obsolete, but emphatic manner which was employed by the covenanting authors," and concluded "I mean to publish on the second of May, the anniversary of John Knox's return to Scotland and my own birth-day."[551] In a letter to Blackwood,[552] he wrote that he had decided to write about the persecution of the first Reformers, and "by this I shall be enabled to give a view of all that relates to the manners and characters connected with the establishment of the Church of Scotland as far as an individual may be supposed to have been concerned."

His style, Galt explained, was of that "old and venerable kind … as most suitable to the subject and the supposed writer [Ringan]." His hope was to be truthful to the subject and he felt that the book "has a great air of reality." The last part of the letter says more about his intended audience. In this book he would abandon the more characteristic Galt language full of Scots idioms: "not being as full of Scotch as some of my other things it has the better chances of being popular in England."[553] His reason for saying this is revealed in a letter to Robert Peel. Galt said that the book was intended, in a sense, to rectify a false history and to cure the hurt feelings of so many Presbyterians. He wrote to Constable, his new publisher, that he was addressing it "to the feelings of the Presbyterians in particular and the devout in general."[554]

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to the Review of *Tales of My Landlord*," in *Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. Thomas M'Crie, 248.

[551] Galt to Lady Blessington, 6 January 1823, in Richard Robert Madden, *The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington* (London, 1855), Vol. 3, 236–39.

[552] Until the very end he wrote to Blackwood about his book, but then he decided not to publish it with Blackwoods but with Oliver and Boyd.

[553] Galt to Constable, 13 January 1823, London, in John Galt, *Literary Correspondence,* ed. Ian Gordon, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, 1995), 175.

Galt believed, like Adam Smith, that no man can rule the course of history according to his own plans and wishes. His views were close to some of the Enlightenment thinkers who were convinced that pure rationalism was not the pattern of history. A prince may intend to produce one effect by his actions, but in fact produce another. Any rational action might produce something uncalculated.[555] This, however, did not exclude the possibility of any grand natural system or divine plan. Bossuet's view endured. "There is no human power which does not serve, despite itself, other designs than its own: God alone knows how to reduce all to his will. That is why everything proceeds according to an ordered development."[556] Although rationalism as a method was much emphasised by Enlightenment thinkers, it had not found much ground in popular sentiment.

Men of the Scottish Enlightenment had a belief in what could be called the inevitability law or the law of heterogeneity of ends. The notion of finding large patterns or regularities in the occurrence of historical events was attractive. This enabled one to fill in the gaps in historical knowledge by applying conjecture. However, historical inevitability brought about a radical change in views about progress and historical action. This meant basically the uncertainty of outcome of every action. Any intended action towards progress coming together with other incidents might result in the opposite direction. So change and development were believed to constitute a law rather than its being a humanly programmed project. Smith talks about an invisible hand, and suggests that individuals are not necessarily those who determine the economic system. Hume's

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[554] Galt to Constable, 13 January 1823, London, in *Literary Correspondence*, vol. 2, 175.
[555] For the importance of historical inevitability, see Isaiah Berlin, *Historical Inevitability* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 3–78.
[556] Jacques Benigne Bossuet, *Discourse on Universal History* (1681), part III quoted in Frederick Copleston,

histories also contributed to such a history of civilisation.[557] In his *History of England*, asserting the Enlightenment political philosophy, he promoted political moderation.[558] Hume argued that the constitution, of which people were so proud in the eighteenth century, was not an ancient institution but had its origin in the Puritans of the seventeenth century. He said that the English owe the "whole freedom of their constitution" to the Puritans "whose principles appear so frivolous and habits so ridiculous." Those independents of the extremity of fanatical zeal "were led into the milder principles of toleration … it is remarkable that so reasonable a doctrine owed its origin, not to reasoning, but to the height of extravagance and fanaticism."[559] And Priestley, the Socinian and natural scientist, maintained that history was not the result of conscious planning by men and he continued to assert that in all history there was the hand of Providence.[560]

What appealed to Galt, most probably, was Priestley's view of the uncertainty of outcome and the existence of Providence. However, Galt did historicize the Presbyterianism of the seventeenth century by delineating Ringan's grandfather in the period of the Reformation, and by showing the fluctuation of belief and institutions in Lowland Scotland. The climax, and what made Presbyterianism Scottish – which was an important legacy in Galt's conception of identity – occurred at the end of the seventeenth

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A History of Philosophy (New York, London: Image Books, 1985), vol. 6, 154.

[557] Laird Okie, *Augustan Historical Writing: Histories of England in the English Enlightenment* (New York: Univ. Press of America, 1991), 204.

[558] For thorough examination of Hume's historical writing see Duncan Forbes, "Introduction," to *David Hume, History of Great Britain: The Reigns of James I and Charles I* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970); Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975); J. W. Burrow *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 26-28; H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth Century Britain* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1977), 132-39.

[559] David Hume, *The History of England* (Philadelphia, 1871), vol. 6, 46–47 and vol. 7, 559.

[560] Joseph Priestley, *Lectures on History, and General Policy, to Which is Prefixed an Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life* (London: Pearson and Rollasan, 1788), 146.

century with the attempts by Charles II to assimilate Scotland's system to Anglicanism. Thus we perceive an eminence of experience and development within a flow of historical events. However, there is a leitmotif that unites the historical narrative, namely the importance of authority.

The theory of the heterogeneity of ends contributed to some extent to the inevitability of outcome. This way of evaluating historical events allowed the historian a flexibility of interpretation. At issue was the writing of revisionist history, of which the histories of Hume and William Robertson were the best known. Robertson, who claimed that he had "placed facts in a different light," questioned the view of the seventeenth century and the Covenanting movement as a struggle for liberty and depicted it as an oppressive period for the Scottish people, who were caught between the absolute will of a monarch and a profligate, inattentive feudal nobility:[561]

> The nobles, exhausting their fortunes by the expense of frequent attendance upon the English court, and by attempts to imitate the manners and luxury of their more wealthy neighbours, multiplied exactions upon the people, who durst not scarce utter complaints which they knew would never redress. And, from the union of the Crowns to the Revolution, in 1688, Scotland was placed in a political situation of all others the most singular, and the most unhappy; subjected at once to the absolute will of a monarch, and to the oppressive jurisdiction of an aristocracy, it suffered all the miseries peculiar to both these forms of government. Its Kings were despotic; its nobles were slaves and tyrants; and the people groaned under the rigorous domination of both.[562]

In the early nineteenth century Thomas M'Crie tried to change the historical consciousness of his contemporary ministers, drawing attention to the Covenant again. He produced scholarly biographies of John Knox and Andrew Melville, based on a close

[561] Colin Kid, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity 1689-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 193.
[562] William Robertson, *History of Scotland During the Reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI Till His Accession to the Crown of England* (London: A. Millar, 1759), iii; and Robertson, *History of Scotland*

study of original sources. Very much influenced by contemporary anti-Catholic discourse, M'Crie's histories were important in pushing back the historical knowledge of the average Scottish minister to the Reformation.[563] He complained that "We have among us many who are as great strangers to the real history of their country, and to patriotic feelings, as these who never were north of London."[564] He emphasised religious and spiritual liberty in the tradition of the Covenanters. After the publication of *Old Mortality* at the end of 1816, M'Crie resolved, like Galt, to challenge Scott's history. In three long review articles in the *Christian Instructor* of January–March 1817, he attacked the novel.[565] He was instructed by the editor, the fiery evangelical Andrew Thomson, "not to spare the author, to praise his Scotch, but to reprobate his principle with all his might."[566] His criticism was, as Galt argued later, that Scott's interpretation of the history was wrong, sympathetic only to the King and Cavaliers and disrespectful of the Covenanters: "Be aware of the real character and tendency of the novel," he warns the reader. "The truth of history has been violated in the caricature of the novelist."[567]

Certainly, the theories of inevitability and these new revisionist histories had an impact on Galt's view of history. These works circulated widely during the period of his own writing and created a common perception of history. Galt's attempt seems to restore a history of Scotland that had been neglected or despised for so long, by furnishing

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During the Reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI Till His Accession to the Crown of England, vol. 3 (London: Cadell, 1797), 295.

[563] H. Watt, *Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption: Incorporating the Chalmers Lectures* (Edinburgh: T. Nelson, 1943), 121–2.

[564] M'Crie, "Review of *Tales of My Landlord*," 252.

[565] Walter Scott answered these accusations in his long review article, "*The Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland, from the Restoration to the Year 1678*, By the Rev. Mr. James Kirkton, &c. *With an Account of the Murder of Archbishop Shar* By James Russell, an actor therein. Edited from the MS. by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Edinburgh," *Quarterly Review* 18 (1817–18): 502–41.

[566] Quoted in Marinell, *Death of Scottish History*, 126.

[567] M'Crie, "Review of *Tales of My Landlord*:" 257, 252, 247.

himself with such theories. And especially relevant, in terms of dealing with the Covenanters, seem to be M'Crie's writings.

Galt's construction has its base in the Scottish "Presbyterian integrity."[568] His statement about the Covenanters resembles that of Laing, an early nineteenth-century historian: the Covenant was a story of resistance. [569] Politically this whole story contains another message so much discussed during the Glorious Revolution and thereafter: the question of resistance to an alienating authority. Galt followed the tradition of Buchanan, who established the authority of the sovereign in the original compact, or consent of the people, and asserted the people's inalienable right to resist oppression and to chastise their tyrant. In that way, it also took sides with the Unionists and Hanoverian apologists. The Covenant was against the dominant power of the time, a power that did not guide its people correctly and therefore was subject to legitimate resistance. The Covenant may have been a period in Scottish history that was bloody and vulgar, but through gradual changes that occur naturally in history this vulgar and violent nature created a more civilized Scotland.

> If we do more – if we run before the age – confusion and anarchy must inevitably ensue; for we are no longer under the dictates of nature, but the rules of society; and our danger does not so much arise from the extent of change that the multitude require, as from the substitution of something new, founded on natural right. The community of mankind is a flowing stream, always seemingly the same identical element, but for ever deposing its original component parts, and deriving new qualities from every fresh tributary, – always apparently the same, but ever changing.[570]

[568] Galt, *Annals of the Parish* (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1978), 167.
[569] Malcolm Laing, *History of Scotland from the Union of the Crowns to the Union of the Kingdoms* (London: T. Cadell, 1800), 22.
[570] John Galt, "Free Trade Question, Letter I to Oliver Yorke, Esq.," *Fraser's Magazine*, November (1832), 594.

Against this background Galt could easily portray the Covenanters as a legitimate part of Scottish history, with their own aspirations, their own beliefs and their own justice. They were not referred to as rebels or fanatical extremists, but simply as acting during a phase of the past; a phase when Scotland had its own parliament and its people fought for their beliefs and liberty.

Reading his comments on *Ringan*, and the novel itself, it becomes apparent that Galt treated society within the discourse as one that belonged to an earlier stage, with its own value system; as one that had connections with the present but owed its existence to dynamic forces other than contemporary society. In doing this he certainly feared being seen as anti-Hannoverian and anti-Union. Although politically he did emphasise the benefit of being part of the British Empire and its system of political equilibrium of national power politics, he nevertheless wrote a Scottish history with national sentiments. In his view national traditions and belief systems should be kept, even though a profitable Union was established with England. In fear of being labelled anti-loyalist, Galt wrote to Robert Peel declaring that he did not intend to insult, in any way, the continuing Hanoverian dynasty or to make any demand for Scottish independence.[571] His aim was to put right the description of a period of history that had not been correctly appreciated by many of his contemporaries.

The past Galt depicts is not irrelevant to the present and certainly it is not a bygone frozen legend of Presbyterian Scotland. Individuality, senses and feelings rather than reason were harmonised and strengthened by Scottish Enlightenment's non-

[571] Galt to Robert Peel, 4 December 1823, BL, *Peel Papers*, Add. 40359, f. 143. See also Galt to Peel, 8 November 1824, BL, *Peel Papers*, Add. 40369, f. 291.

rationalism and interest in the nature of man and society. Geyl, in his work on historians described the period:

> Now that the limitations of human reason, both as the motive force and as the instrument for the unravelling of the process of history were realized and the conceptions of an organic cohesion and of continuity had entered the mind of that generation, the past acquired a reality of its own, irreplaceable and equal to the present in value.[572]

This attitude was supported by the newly emerging idea of writing about the past as it was, or in Rankean terminology "as it really happened." Galt intended not only to foster an interest in history but to increase the readers' historical consciousness, to make it appear and be accepted as it was. The theories about inevitability gave historians a flexibility to see each historical event in its own right and in its own context. Galt was interested in making his histories as interesting as possible, but it was even more important to make the descriptions and the characters he depicted as true to historical reality as possible.[573] As for the new historians of historicism, Galt tried to find something to say, "to excuse, not the deed, but the doers – men, after all, like their victims and like ourselves, imprisoned within the illusions of their time, of their country, of their kind, and driven."[574] In his story about the Covenanters, Galt showed the participants' congruity with the conditions of their time, that their beliefs, enthusiasms and acts were inevitable within the context and ideas of their time.

This idea that the present was strongly connected to the past, that history itself was like an extending consciousness (as in the Hegelian conception) and that present conditions were the result of the past, was of special interest for those who shared the

[572] Pieter Geyl, *Debates with Historians* (Glasgow: Fotana/Collins, 1974), 13.
[573] Galt to Blackwood, 31 July 1820, London, NLS, *Blackwood Papers*, MS 4005, ff. 89–90.
[574] This was said about Ranke, and it shows how much similarity there was between his historicism and Galt. Geyl, *Debates,* 18.

early nineteenth-century conservative tradition. It was held against the liberal conviction that, due to our rational faculty, men are not totally ruled by the past and can change and choose the conditions they live in as they attempted to do at the French Revolution. The conservative approach, especially after the French Revolution, emphasised the necessity of the state and its role in a progressive history, which implied that citizens needed to subject their wills voluntarily to the state. Social hierarchy was to be preserved, and rapid large-scale reforms were regarded negatively, since they brought about chaos and instability. This was an obstacle to healthy development. Conservatives did not direct their criticisms against the state, which had the best interest of the whole nation in mind, but instead against the moral condition of society and the sufferings resulting from social and political changes.[575]

The conservative view of the past as a necessary condition for the present, and its belief in the gradual development of civilisations, again originating mostly in Scottish Enlightenment thought, could connect the past to the present and future. Thinkers such as Burke or Ranke best exemplified this conviction. Some of them formulated a vague notion, arguing that they wanted to vanish from their work, becoming as neutral and objective in dealing with the history they were writing as possible. Others like Hegel, were committed to an evolutionary view of history, in which patterns of development were determined by some general conception.

Galt's first concern in *Ringan* was to disassociate himself from the character and, secondly, to distance the readers from their contemporary prejudices and beliefs so that the novel could be read in a historical manner. He argued that it was a mistake to assume that the sentiments expressed in his writings were his own. The characters acted in

[575] See chapter 3 for Galt and conservatism.

accordance with the conditions of their time, and their beliefs and actions were the inevitable consequence of the conditions of that era. As he explained in his *Literary Life*:

> I have supposed a Covenanter relating the adventures of his grandfather, who lived during the Reformation. It was therefore necessary that I should conceive distinctly what a Covenanter would think of a Reformer in the church, to enable him to relate what such a person would do in the time of John Knox. There was here, if I may be allowed the expression, a transfusion of character that could only be rightly understood by showing how a Reformer himself acted and felt in the opinion of a Covenanter. To enable the reader to estimate the invention put forth in the work, and to judge of the manner in which the Covenanter performed his task, I made him give his autobiography, in which was kept out of view every thing that might recall the separate existence of John Galt.[576]

At the battle of Killiecrankie, he said, when Ringan Gilhaize tried to kill Claverhouse behind a fence, it was wrong for the reader to cry it was a murder. "Now when this judgement was pronounced, I do say the book must have been read inattentively … if the critic had not been in the error of ascribing the sentiments of Ringan Gilhaize to me, he would have seen that the hero was under a vow, and acting as the persecuted Covenanter."[577]

Galt's major aim was to understand what had happened, to transmit transactions and occurrences as they were. In this sense Galt can be seen as having a Rankean understanding of history.[578] However, his political emphasis was not on a European community, as Ranke's was; Galt did believe that it was a political benefit for Scotland to be part of the British Empire, but he still addressed the issues of Scottish national sentiments within a British political equilibrium. As made apparent in his travel literature, Galt believed in a universal morality or law, but one which originated or was nurtured by different sources in each nation. In the case of Scotland, this was Presbyterianism; and

[576] Galt, *Literary Life*, vol. 1, 251.

this had to remain so. Galt did not intend his histories to be read only by gentlemen or the intellectual elites, as did the exponents of neo-classical history, writing in the tradition of Thucydides. The histories that Galt wrote were for the common people as much as to appeal to the minds of the higher orders. He was attempting, perhaps, to popularise history as a part of the Enlightenment project to shine light into the minds of the unenlightened. His choice of writing about the Covenanting period as a liberating time, with a method historically true and right, was part of a construction of a national history and consciousness.

> Using a method similar to that used by Scott, Galt focused more on the sentiments of common Scotsmen, compassionately depicting the ordinary Lowland Scots as part of a simple Scottish reality, rather than as coarse characters. The past and present remained as they were with both their positive and negative features. The past was an inseparable part of the present, as it set the basis for the customs and beliefs of present society. Past societies and beliefs could not be condemned, but must be empathised with. In this sense, by choosing to write about the neglected and unappreciated seventeenth century, Galt engaged in writing national history. He reminded the audience of a separate Scottish history and urged them to understand that period as the period of the modern nation's foundation and the source of its true values.

Any sort of history writing can never be just a matter of "registering memory." Selecting certain past events in order to construct a history necessarily requires, firstly, a description of events and, secondly, a putting of these events together in an arrangement understandable in a certain way; or, as mentioned in the last chapter, in Scott's terms they were to be translated for a certain audience. Any historical construction is necessarily

[577] Ibid., 252.

connected to description. As writers such as R. G. Collingwood and Dominick LaCapra have noted, a historical text has a "documentary" function. However, after this documentary description of some state of affairs in the past, the historian begins to construct these facts into a historical narrative. "The text has an effective, or what LaCapra calls a "worklike" function, critically constructing or reconstructing the given in history and foregrounding the historian's "transferential" relation in the dialogue with the past."[579]

Galt's construction was conservative: he supported the social hierarchy, the continuity of the existing state and state traditions, and a balance between reform and tradition. However, on the other side of the coin he was supportive of a Scottish past, which was to be transmitted to the contemporary reader by the writing of national history. Reading Galt's history of the seventeenth century within such a context can be highly useful. This provides an insight into his choice of history and explains the inevitability of enthusiasm behind his characters' actions. That enthusiasm was a part of the historical reality itself, and it had an origin, not only in the intellect, but the circumstances of the time. Ringan speaks of this:

> And herein, courteous reader, should aught of a fiercer feeling than belongs to the sacred sternness of truth and justice escape from my historical pen, thou wilt surely pardon the same, if there be any of the gracious truth of Christian gentleness in thy bosom; for now I have to tell of things that have made the annals of the land as red as crimson, and filled my house with the blackness of ashes and universal death. (*Ringan*, 341)

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[578] Geyl, *Debates,* 20.
[579] James Chandler, *England in 1819, The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historian*

6.3 The Long Reformation and the Covenant

While Galt was writing *Ringan* he wrote to Blackwood in December 1822 asking him to send him the books of Wodrow, Alexander Peden, Ralph Erskine "or [similar] sort of books."[580] Similarly in January 1823 he asked George Boyd, his new publisher in Edinburgh, for copies of Howie's *Scots Worthies* and Maitland's *History of Edinburgh*, which allowed Galt to give a more accurate picture by using their circumstantial descriptions of historical characters and details about the old city of Edinburgh. He must have also used Knox himself, Buchanan and M'Crie, as there are many similarities between *Ringan* and works by these men.[581] Furthermore, he refers to Clarendon as a further reading in the text. (*Ringan*, 216) These were the sources known to be the most relevant for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century religious history.

Throughout the periods covered by the novel, namely the sixteenth-century Reformation, the Civil War, the Interregnum and the Restoration, Galt constructed his history around the concepts of right, obligation and authority, and property, which were the foundations of political thought in early modern Europe. The Covenant as a document is referred to as a "solemn charter of the religious rights and liberties of God's people in Scotland." (*Ringan*, 204) Galt justified the seventeenth-century uprisings by emphasising theological and political motives. His shift from a theological to a political justification, emphasising liberty and property rights grounded in the constitution, was a significant departure from the traditional conceptions of nation and polity. His portrait of the Reformation not only recited the theological issues but represented them realistically in

(Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), xv.
[580] Galt to Blackwood, 19 December 1822, London, EUL, *Galt Letters*, La. II 422/105.

terms of the struggle for the establishment of a Reformed Church in Scotland. However, his vocabulary of property and nature as engendering rights functioned not simply as a means of claiming man as a political animal or by nature a citizen. It was more a conviction close to what John Ford argues, "the bonds of Scottish society, ecclesiastical and civil, comprised laws and oaths; but the bonds had to be lawful, consistent with divine law, and for the radical Presbyterians that meant that human laws and oaths could never do more than reinforce the bonds of divine law."[582]

Galt showed the Covenanters as subjects acknowledging binding laws, "in order to maintain a life void of offence in all temporal concerns, they were by ordinare obedient and submissive to those in authority over them, whether holding jurisdiction from the King, or in virtue of baronies and feudalities." (*Ringan*, 205) However, they were ready to "defend and resist" the authority aif it broke the bonds of divine law, illustrating the continuing problems of the Reformation. The idea of liberty involved was not a belief in an individual's liberty or right to worship as he pleased, but instead referred to the liberty of the properly constituted Protestant Church to conduct its affairs without interference from the government. Liberty of this sort was designed to allow Protestants to practice their religion within a securely Protestant state, without interference from a civil authority.

> Neither king, nor priest, not any human authority, has the right to interfere between you and your God; and allegiance ends where persecution begins. Never, therefore, in the trials awaiting you, forget, that the right to resist in matters of conscience is the foundation-stone of religious liberty; O see … that you guard it weel! (*Ringan*, 196)

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[581] See "Notes," in *Ringan*, 457–58, 460, 462.

[582] John D. Ford, "The Lawful Bonds of Scottish Society: The Five Articles of Perth, the Negative Confession and the National Covenant," *The Historical Journal* 37 (1994): 64.

Galt's history, or Ringan's "family memorial," begins in the Lowlands with the burning of Walter Mill at St Andrews in 1558, and ends with the death of Claverhouse at Killiecrankie in 1689. Ringan tells the reader at the very beginning: "I intend mainly to bear witness to those passages of the late bloody persecution in which I was myself both a soldier and a sufferer … At the same time it is needful that I should rehearse as much of what happened in the troubles of the Reformation, as, in its effects and influences, worked upon the issues of my own life."(*Ringan*, 3) As a result, *Ringan* combines the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century struggles as one and the same. For Scotland the tumults about the canons, liturgy and Prayer Book in the seventeenth-century could be seen as part of an unresolved or unaccomplished Reformation.[583]

Galt's history emphasised the unfinished struggle of the Protestant Church as problems in the seventeenth century which had not been resolved in the sixteenth century. When Ringan's father, Sawners Gilhaize, is accused of being a "sower of sedition," his answer is clearly a clue to his perception of his actions as an unfinished cause: "in all temporal things he was a true and leil subject … But against a usurpation of the Lord's rights, his hand, his heart, and his father's sword, that had been used in the Reformation, were all alike ready." (*Ringan*, 198) The developments in the century before the Covenanting period had been important in undermining allegiances to princes. A remark of Julien Davies about the Caroline period is explanatory. Galt's Covenanters do not question the Supremacy directly but "the ecclesiastical innovations of the reign could not

[583] By arguing this it became a question of the nature of the Kirk and the King's authority over the church. Kevin Sharpe hints towards such an argument, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1992), 787–88; and it is argued by Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 127–33; Hyman, "Church Militant," 49. For a general historiographical review of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Scottish history see the rather old but insightful article of Bruce Lenman, "Reinterpreting Scotland's Last Two Centuries of Independence," *The Historical Journal* 25 (March,

fail to provoke principled and constitutional evaluation, when the demands of royal authority within the Church and Commonwealth appeared to conflict with the authority of God, the conscience, or the congregation."[584] The Stuart policy of harnessing confessional authority by imposing direct control over the clerical hierarchy, which penetrated every parish, meant access to the minds of all subjects. Thus religion and worship, which for most subjects was more important than politics, became a vast state interest.[585]

Ringan also demonstrated, against Scott's depiction, a principled evaluation of the struggle between a Reformed society and an increasingly Erastian Church administration. The same struggle was, to certain extent, an issue again in the eighteenth century and was to be carried on till the Disruption of 1843. The Moderate Church, composed of some Enlightened churchmen who held power in the Kirk in the mid-eighteenth century, was the main opposition to the orthodox Presbyterians who emphasised the Covenanting tradition of the Kirk and the Popular party, which incorporated many evangelicals. One of the main objections of the Popular party to Moderatism was its association with the civil authority, through the enforcement of patronage and its standing in direct opposition to liberty for a thoroughly reformed Protestant Church.

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scottish history, liberty had strong Protestant connotations. It referred, first and foremost, to the historically obtained liberties from absolute or arbitrary authority, represented by the government of the

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1982): 217–28.

[584] Julien Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church, Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625–1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 3.

[585] For clerical hierarchy as a governing tool see Scott, *England's Troubles*, 127–28; Davies, *Caroline*

Stuarts and the ecclesiastical authority of Rome. The endurance of this idea was facilitated and justified by the Enlightenment historiographies and methodologies. The historian Hume influenced some Popular party churchmen, though in a different way from that observable in Galt. They emphasised that religious liberty, which was not achieved by the Scottish Covenanters by fighting, was introduced into Britain as a Dutch export from across the English Channel during the reign of William and Mary.[586] Galt, in contrast, kept his attention on Scotland and what preceded the era of the Covenanters, rather than what came after. As to the Covenanters themselves, he made clear their self-image as liberating soldiers of God.

The first phase of the Reformation and Ringan's story began with the cooperation of the Protestant lords and "brave spirits of the reformers" against the "cormorants of idolatry." The Scottish lords and ordinary Scots were portrayed in *Ringan* as working in close cooperation. Ringan's grandfather, Michael Gilhaize, born into a Catholic family, became a devout Presbyterian, left home early, and went to Edinburgh where he took up service with the earl of Glencairn, who was the first to renounce the government. Likewise, Archibald Campbell, the fourth earl of Argyle, was one of the pre-eminent supporters of the Reformation in Scotland (*Ringan*, 8–9, 85). Michael, the grandfather, during his long life (he dies at the age of 91 years), gets involved in the troubles of the Scottish Reformation and Stuart politics. He meets the important historical figures of his time, including John Knox, and is involved in events including the destruction of images,

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Captivity, 301; and D. Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637–1644: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (New Abbot: David & Charles, 1973).

[586] William Porteous, *Doctrine of Toleration*, quoted in Ned C. Landsman, "Presbyterians and Provincial Society: The Evangelical Enlightenment in the West of Scotland, 1740–1775," in John Dwyer and Richard Sher, eds., *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1993), 194–209, 203.

the murder of Henry Darnley, the Queen's husband, and the capturing of the archbishop of St Andrews.

During the Reformation the Scots believed that they were exercising the divine right of resistance against an unlawful authority who refused to acknowledge their Reformed faith, sealed in the National Covenant in 1643. Galt both in *Ringan* and in his postscript to it refers to the seventeenth-century issue as a resistance and a defence of liberty of worship. The Covenant was to be seen within this context. Ringan was familiar with the proclamation of the rights of the community of the Realm of Scotland, the Declaration of Arbroath.

> Edict and proclamation against field preaching and conventicles came following each other, and the latest was the fiercest and fellest of all which had preceded. But the cause of truth, and the right of communion with the Lord, was not to be given up: "It is not for glory," we said in the words of those brave Scottish barons that redeemed, with King Robert the Bruce, their native land from the thraldom of the English Edward, "nor is it for riches, neither is it for honour, but it is for liberty alone we contend, which no true man will lose but with his life;" and therefore it was that we would not yield obedience to the tyranny, which was revived with new strength by the death of James Sharp, in revenge for his doom, but sought, in despite of decrees and statutes, to hear THE WORD where we believed it was best spoken. (*Ringan*, 340)

The contract made between a ruler and the subjects should have been a "mutual contract" but was disregarded by the Stewarts (*Ringan*, 143). In his postscript Galt proudly explains – by defending to the Declaration of Arbroath of 1320, a remonstrance prepared for the Pope against the claims of King Edward II – that there was a historical difference in the characters of the English and Scottish people:

> Monarchy is an indestructible principle in our notions of civil government … But in our *natural* attachment to monarchy and its various gradations, and in the homages which we in consequence freely perform, it does not follow that there should be any unmanly humility. On the contrary, servile loyalty is comparatively rare among us, and it was in England that the

> Stuarts first DARED to broach the doctrine of the divine right of kings. (*Ringan*, 449)

The struggle in the first period – the Reformation – was against the Queen, "the fair and faulty Mary whose doleful captivity and woeful end scarcely expiated the sins and sorrows that she caused to her ill-used and poor misgoverned native realm of Scotland." Furthermore, the struggle was against a corrupt Church that refused to acknowledge the higher law. Ringan's grandfather was active in "procuring adherents to the protestant cause, as set forth in the first covenant." He was enlisted into the cause of the Lords of the Congregation in the service of the renowned Earl of Glencairn. Ringan, the grandson and the narrator, engaged in the same struggle in the seventeenth century and pointed out that his grandfather's was the same cause and struggle "against the cruel attempt that was made, in our own day and generation, to load the neck of Scotland with the grievous chains of prelatic tyranny"(*Ringan*, 7).

6.4 Justification of Resistance

In *Ringan* this struggle was to be carried on in the seventeenth century, in a Kirk not yet truly reformed in ritual and government. Similarly, there was a ruler, or rulers, who refused to accept the Reformed ways and continued to interfere with the ecclesiastical affairs of Scotland. The Stuart government insisted on what was looked upon as an Erastian church establishment, beginning during the Jacobean period but increasing during the Caroline period, raising anew the old struggle of the reformers. Although weakly organised, the western centres of resistance were quite successful in keeping episcopal rule from becoming settled. The built-up tensions, resulting in the civil conflict,

came to an end only when episcopacy was overthrown in the wake of the Dutch invasion of Britain.

The seventeenth-century section of the novel depicts those who still struggled for the Reformation, trying to establish their own Reformed Church against varying degrees of persecution, pressure and harassment. The connection between the two phases of Reformation history depicted in the novel is certainly the Covenant and the right to resist ungodly rulers. Though the Covenant could and often did mean both the National Covenant, as it was signed in Greyfriars Churchyard in Edinburgh in 1638, and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, it was doubtless the former which meant most to Galt. *Ringan* believed that they were renewing the same oath and contract with God that their ancestors had made during the earlier stage of the Reformation. (*Ringan*, 197)

The introduction of the Book of Common Prayer sealed the discontent and brought about the signing of the Covenant in 1638. In essence this was a contract with God signed by nobles, ministers and thousands of ordinary Scots, who pledged themselves to defend Scotland's rights, by stating what they agreed in Kirk and state matters, desired a free Scottish Parliament and General Assembly, the abolition of episcopacy, and a limitation of royal power of the king in relation to the power of the Scottish nobility and the Kirk.[587] Ringan says that from his grandfather's stories about the reforming times he "was first taught to feel, know, and understand, the divine right of resistance"(*Ringan,* 3).[588] Later, he learned from a minister, Mr Swinton, about "the

[587] For a time-table of the seventeenth-century struggles which also is a flow chart of *Ringan*'s story, see appendix 3.

[588] Galt had received, most probably, a similar religious education and transmitted it to his children. His son Alexander (1817-1893), who became a minister of Finance in Canada, reflected his pious Protestant upbringing. See Alexander T. Galt, *A Protest Against the Efforts Now Being Made in Canada by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy to Put into Practice Among Her Majesty's Protestant Subjects the Doctrines of the Syllabus and the Vatican* (London: Macintosh, 1877).

rights and truths of religion" and so came to understand that in matters of faith no authority could interfere and that "the Covenant was not a temporal but a spiritual league, trenching in no respect upon the natural and contributed authority of the kingly office." (*Ringan*, 217) The theme that runs through the entire novel is the use and abuse of authority and the right to resist such rulers who were guilty of abuse. Knox's historical answer to Mary Queen of Scots is a key reference to how Galt portrays this right:

> "When I last spoke with her Highness," said John Knox, "she laid sore to my charge, that I had brought the people to receive a religion different from what their princes allowed, asking sharply, if this was not contrary to the Divine command, which enjoins that subjects should obey their rulers; so that I was obliged to contend plainly, that true religion derived its origin and authority, not from princes, but from God; that princes were often most ignorant respecting it, and that subjects never could be bound to frame their religious sentiments according to the pleasure of their rulers, else the Hebrew ought to have conformed to the idolatry of Pharaoh, and Daniel and his associates to that of Nebuchadnezzar, and the primitive Christians to that of the Roman emperors." (*Ringan*, 141–142)

The good will of the Covenanters, or at least their loyalty in worldly matters to the constitution and the authority of the king, is frequently mentioned in the novel. Ringan finds it especially important to distinguish their actions from the Cromwellian parliament at the time of the execution of Charles I, since "in doing what it did in that tragical event, it was guided by a speculative spirit of political innovation and change, different and distinct, both in principle and object, from the cause which made our Scottish Covenanters have recourse to arms."[589] (*Ringan,* 218) The political disasters which marked the century are shown by the novel to have their origins in the failures of the crown. Galt was faithful in his recreation of the subversive Scottish mind of the

[589] The language of law and necessity was used in the seventeenth century by radical Presbyterians. Ford, "Lawful Bonds," 64. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the same language is condemned as Whiggish. See William Robertson, *The Liberty, Property, and Religion of the Whigs in a Letter to a Whig; Occasioned by Some Discourse Upon the Reverend Dr. Sacheverell's Sermons on Palm-Sunday, and 29th*

seventeenth century, in its theocratic convictions and in its perception of a broken contract by an ill-advised king.[590] Granted such a mind-set, Galt explained, the Scottish Calvinists were driven by the "utmost necessity."

6.5 The Radicalisation of Ringan

Ringan's second and third volumes explain the inevitability of the Covenanters' struggles in seventeenth-century Scotland, increasing gradually after the1630s. The characters and circumstances described in the novel display the spirit of the age. It could not have been otherwise. Conflict came predominantly over the matter of ecclesiastical government. *Ringan* points out that most of the great religious debate in Scotland since the Reformation rested more on Christian polity rather than Christian doctrine, fundamentally the relationship between church and state and the related matter of the right of resistance. The symbol of the Covenant in these conflicts is as essential in *Ringan*, as it was for seventeenth-century Scots. For many Protestants the signing of the Covenant was a historical justification of their cause, of their resisting authority, confirming, as it did, a prophetic pattern hidden in the significant event.[591]

Charles's tactless attempts to make the Kirk more like the Laudian Church of England were seen by contemporaries, as by some modern historians, as truly part of the

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of May, 1713 (London: John Morphew, 1713), 4–6.

[590] The reader may judge Galt's fidelity with the aid of modern studies. See especially Donald Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637–44* (Newton Abbot, 1973); Maurice Lee, *The Road to Revolution: Scotland Under Charles I, 1625–1637* (Urbana, 1985); Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 769–847.

[591] For discussion of such views in England, see G. J. R Parry, *A Protestant Vision: William Harrison and the Reformation of Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 96–137.

Counter-Reformation. *Ringan* shares the view of many modern writings, explaining that the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer marked the beginning of real resistance to the king. However, at first Ringan does not criticise the king directly, for that was certainly was not acceptable in the period.[592] He saw the relations of Scotland and England during reign of Charles I as an ill-organised communication system and he refers to an ill-advised king.[593] He believed that "Charles' offences were shared with his counsellors, whose duty it was to have bridled his arbitrary pretensions," and he was mourned as a victim after his execution. (*Ringan*, 218) It was seen, in particular, as the Popish bishops' work. In *Ringan* the hatred towards the bishops is clear to the reader. Ringan draws attention to repeated error in speaking of a parallel pair to Charles I and William Laud — Charles II and James Sharp, archbishop of St. Andrews. (*Ringan*, 223-4)

The theme of subjects wronged in every sense during the Stuart reigns recurs throughout Ringan's family history. Ringan himself was a child at the time of the signing of the Covenant. He declares that after Charles I's execution, he reports that "every true Scott … felt [it] in his heart." The Cromwellian era passed without great turbulence in his family and Ringan takes no part in the agitations of the Restoration period, until the persecutions started. (*Ringan*, 217, 221, 220) Ironically, the history of Ringan's own family and the accession of Charles II to the throne are linked together. The king who initiated the worsening of the struggles, Charles II, was crowned at Scone on the day of Ringan's marriage. His radicalisation coincides with the intensification of government

[592] Peter Donald, *An Uncounseled King: Charles I and the Scottish Trouble 1637–1641* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 320, 785; Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637* (Edinburgh, 1954), 52–59.
[593] For modern comment on this perception, described by Galt, see Lee, *Road to Revolution*, chs 2, 3;

control over the Kirk and preaching. He lived well into William and Anne's reign and saw all his family destroyed during the struggles.

Charles II was crowned in 1650 in Scotland, a Covenanted king, who signed the Covenant of 1643. However, a decade later, on the anniversary of the King's restoration, because of "a backsliding generation," among the clergy, nobles, magistrates and people there was an increase of "anxiety of spirit." A clear intimation of the coming struggles came on the first of October 1662. They heard in the parish that "all the ministers that had received Gospel ordination from and after the year forty-nine, and who still refused to bend the knee to Baal, were banished, with their families, from their kirks and manses" and "the blood-hounds of persecution" were let loose. (*Ringan*, 225-6) "It was manifested to every eye that the fences of the vineyard were indeed broken down, and that the boar was let in." (*Ringan*, 227) "The proclamation was as a stunning blow on the forehead of the Covenanters." Ringan's first judgement was that the new generation had not enough of the courage of their forefathers to "stand forth to renew the Covenant," and defend "[t]he persecuted Kirk of Scotland." (*Ringan*, 228, 230) However soon Ringan and others took arms again against the assault.

The ejection, in 1660-62 of the nonconformist Presbyterian clergy from their churches and the annulling of all the laws passed since 1633 increased the despair of the parishioners and marked the return to a rightful resistance by the Reformed. Ringan pondered: "Is a marvellous thing to think of the madness with which the minds of those in authority at that times were kindled; first, to create causes of wrong to the consciences of the people, and afterwards to enact laws for the natural fruit of that frantic policy." The imposition of an Episcopalian church drove people to field-preaching, banned by

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Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 17–20; Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 771–773.

archbishop's edicts and decrees. Ringan asserted that it was these attempts of the government to disperse them by the sword that brought on resistance." (*Ringan*, 236)

Certainly, there were disputes over the right of resistance and different groups appeared who had separated from the established Kirk (*Ringan*, 370). However, *Ringan*'s point is made in a crucial passage at the beginning of the description of the last struggles. After saying that there were more than three hundred other banned ministers,[594] Ringan continues: "[T]hough it was an era of much sorrow and of many tears, it was thus, [that] out of the ruins and the overthrow of the first Presbyterian church the Lord built up among us a stronghold and sanctuary for his truth and law." (*Ringan*, 231). This signifies not only the success of the conventicles, but also Galt's perception of the Covenanters as a stronghold of the Scottish people, that which kept the Scottish people together and rebuilt the nation. The crowd marching to Dumfries, just before the Pentland rising, cry, "we are and we will make free." (*Ringan*, 231, 253)

The oppressions of the government produced reactions such as the rising at Dalry, Dumfries, the Pentland Rising of 1666, the assassination of Archbishop Sharp of St. Andrews and the battles of Drumclog and Bothwell Brig in 1679.[595] The success of the resistance, the prevalence of field preaching and Drumclog, however, seems to have made the government turn to a more forceful repression in the 1680s and especially after 1685.[596] The government's use of armed troops under John Graham of Claverhouse[597] to defeat the Covenanters is another landmark of Ringan's radicalisation and is spoken of in the last volume of the book.

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[594] In fact, it was 270.
[595] See *Ringan*, vol. 2 chapters 23-6 and vol. 3 chapters 8, 10 and 11.
[596] On government policies and responses to the challenges, see Hyman, "Church Militant," 49–74.
[597] John Graham Claverhouse (1648-89) after serving as a volunteer in the French and Dutch armies was

For harbouring and attending a non-juring minister, troops were quartered in his house and he was fined a heavy sum. He joined the Pentland rising, he was imprisoned three times, met Claverhouse, his deadly enemy, and lost his eldest son at Bothwell Bridge in 1679. During his imprisonment in 1680, his farmhouse was burned; his wife and daughters were raped and killed by the troops and for a short time, after this incident, Ringan lost consciousness. Though he had been fighting for a Covenanting cause till then, at this point Ringan becomes dedicated to the destruction of the house of Stuart. As the pressures and executions increased Ringan exclaimed: "Upon Charles and James Stuart, and all their guilty line, O Lord, let it be done" (*Ringan*, 394). At a hill meeting towards the end of the reign of Charles II he asserted:

> You will call to mind, that in this sore controversy, the cause of debate came not from us. We were peaceable Christians, enjoying the shade of the vine and fig tree of the Gospel, planted by the care and cherished by the blood of our forefathers, protected by the laws, and gladdened in our protection by the oaths and the covenants which the King had sworn to maintain. The Presbyterian freedom of worship was our property, – we were in possession and enjoyment, no man could call our right to it in question, – the King had vowed, as a condition before he was allowed to receive the crown, that he would preserve it. Yet, for more than twenty years, there has been a most cruel, fraudulent, and outrageous endeavour instituted, and carried on, to deprive us of that freedom and birthright. We were asking no new thing from Government, we were taking no step to disturb Government, we were in peace with all men, when Government, with the principles of a robber and the cruelty of a tyrant, demanded of us to surrender those immunities of conscience which our fathers had earned and defended; to deny the Gospel as it is written in the Evangelists, and to accept the commentary of Charles Stuart, a man who has had no respect to the most solemn oaths, and of James Sharp, the apostate of St. Andrews, whose crimes provoked a deed, that but for their crimson hue, no man could have doubted to call a most foul murder. The King and his crew … are, to the indubitable judgment of all just men, the causers and the aggressors in the existing difference between his subjects and him. In so

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appointed in 1677 as Captain in west of Scotland to act against the conventicles and the Covenanters again between 1682-85.

> far, therefore, if blame there be, it lieth not with us nor in our cause. (*Ringan*, 407)

The mind of a seventeenth century man, and especially a Covenanter, full of fights with devils and other spiritual conflicts, most profoundly expressed in James Hogg's *Confessions of Justified Sinner* and *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, reveals itself in Ringan too.[598] Throughout the novel the reader finds his father and he, whenever troubled, seeking guidance by arbitrarily opening the Bible and reading the passage that revealed God's will to him. At a crucial moment Ringan likewise ordered his son: "Open the Bible, and see what the Lord instructs us to do at this time." His son opened a page at random and read "O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, and say, What is done?" Thus he sends his last remaining son to join the uprising of the Cameronians. "I had laid that son," he says, "my only son, whom I so loved, on the altar of the Covenant, an offering unto the Lord; but still I did hope that maybe it would be according to the mercy of wisdom that he would provide a lamb in the bush for the sacrifice" (*Ringan,* 370). But when imprisoned in Edinburgh, Ringan saw through the window his son's severed head carried though the streets (*Ringan*, 393).

The father's words are very dramatic "In the same instant a bloody head on a halbert was held up to us. – I looked – I saw the ghastly features, and I would have kissed those lifeless lips; for, O! they were my son's." This scene is also, in a sense, the beginning of the end of Claverhouse and the house of Stuart. It had been agreed by now that the Scots involved in the cause of a Reformed Church would resist Charles II and moreover use their own means to help the Prince of Orange to come over. The Privy

[598] Ringan's father is mortified by the idea of a Spanish invasion and develops sleep and other disorders. *Ringan*, 188-9. James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981); Hogg, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press: 1976)

Council in Edinburgh was seen to be full of greedy and power-oriented men who were responsible for implementing Charles's laws.

> The inner mind of the Privy Council, by which I clearly saw, that what with those members who satisfied their conscience as to iniquity, because it was made seemingly lawful by human statutes, and what with those who, like Lord Perth, considered the kingdom the King's estate, and the people his tenantry, not the subjects of laws by which he was bound as much as they; together with those others who, like the Bishop [Patterson the Bishop of Edinburgh], considered mercy and justice as expedients of state policy, that there was no hope for the peace and religious liberties of the Presbyterians, merely by resistance; and I, from that time, began to think it was only through the instrumentality of the Prince of Orange, then heir-presumptive to the crown, failing James Stuart, Duke of York, that my vow could be effectually brought to pass. (*Ringan*, 400)

In 1685 Charles II died and James II, a Catholic, succeeded to the throne, initiating what were known as the "killing times." A last attempt was made to gather together all the Covenanters, who had been divided by now into factions, and the Earl of Argyle unsuccessfully tried to lead a revolt against the government (*Ringan*, 414–423). A Scottish convention was drafted, *Claim of Rights*, demanding a free Parliament and a Presbyterian Kirk, and relief came with the Prince of Orange's invasion of England in 1688.

Now, Ringan's last quest awaited him. This was the destruction of Claverhouse, which acts in the story as a type of subplot in the third volume. Ringan's last pursuit is also the end of the exploration of liberty in Galt's history. Claverhouse, who had led the royal troops against the Covenanters, had now himself become an outlaw and the leader of the first of the Jacobite risings. Despite his age and exhausted body and soul, Ringan participates in the last battle. The stray bullet that killed Claverhouse, and caused the collapse of the winning Jacobites in the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689, is ascribed to Ringan's hands in Galt's novel. It is the apex of Ringan's endeavours, of his growing

fanaticism and his absolute belief that he had been chosen by God and has been guided by heaven in his task.

> A mighty spirit entered into mine, and I felt as if I was in that moment clothed with the armour of divine might … In the same moment I looked up, and there was a vision in the air as if all the angels of brightness, and the martyrs in their vestments of glory, were assembled on the walls and battlements of heaven to witness the event, – and I started up and cried, "I have delivered my native land!"

But soon he recovered himself and "in the same instant I remembered to whom the glory was due, and falling again on my knees, I raised my hands and bowed my head as I said, "Not mine, O Lord, but thine is the victory." (*Ringan*, 447)

CHAPTER 7

CHANGE, STAGES AND SOCIETY

Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but Mutability.
Shelley, *"Mutability"* (1816)

Galt grew up in a special region in Scotland. Glasgow was a vivid place at the end of the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth century. Here the most dramatic social transformations in Scotland were taking place and there was an active intellectual life: Glasgow had an Enlightenment of its own. The social and economic changes had encouraged the search for the causes of these improvements. For the generality of intellectuals in the early nineteenth century, Scotland's Union with England (1707) marked the beginning of a prospering Scotland. Galt also suggests the positive influence of the British economy on Scottish history.[599] New images of Scotland were in juxtaposition with those of an underdeveloped Scotland progressing, both in agriculture and commerce, with Scots refining themselves in manners and establishing themselves on a further stage in the history of civilization. However, it is important to note that the promotion of the new Scotland made in an Unionist and pro-British mold did not necessarily involve anti-Scottishness.[600] Most of Galt's works on late eighteenth-century

[599] Katie Trumper rightly notes that Galt argued for the influence of the British imperial economy on Scotland. However, she goes on to mention that he saw the economic modernization as a derailing of the political struggle for democratisation and Scotland suffering a fiscal and political colonization. This was not the case. He was pro-British and viewed the economic developments positively. It was, as discussed in chapter 3, the political economy rather than economic modernization he opposed. Katie Trumper, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton Uni. Press, 1997), 277.
[600] Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 18.

Scottish society form part of this intellectual discussion, describing both material and spiritual changes and considering their consequences. Again, Glasgow and its environment, was not only a prospering region but an intellectual and spiritual headquarters where the consequences of industrial and commercial development were starting to be questioned quite early.[601] That leading commercial city was the centre of the evangelical movement and of the Popular Party.[602]

In eighteenth-century Scotland, change, inevitable as it was, was partly attributed to 'progress' and seen to be producing a mutation of the society into another higher stage of civilization. Galt's works taken as a whole reflect the two sides of change: the positive development and the negative outcomes of change. They elaborate on the issues of the progress of wealth, agriculture and occupations, and compare different societies, especially when he talks about the Levant and the Colonies, to emphasize the different stages of these societies.

Galt's depiction of societal change was made in an historicist manner, excluding any class or political interests. He tried to be as non-controversial as possible, although his works reflected the awareness of political causes and polemics. Temporary political issues were, according to him, profitless topics and readers' attention should be drawn to higher concerns, such as opportunities for commercial and ethical progress.[603] As in

[601] Industrialisation as a concept was only germinating in the 1820s. See Christopher Harvie, "Revolution and the Rule of Law 1789-1851," in *The Oxford History of Britain*, ed. Kenneth O. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 471.

[602] Ned Landsman records that "evangelical movements' strongest support came from Glasgow itself and from rapidly changing parishes in the surrounding shires of Lanark, Stirling and Renfrew. Two groups that were closely connected to those transformations were particularly important: Glasgow merchants who traded with America and tradesmen throughout the region, especially the burgeoning community of spinners and weavers in and around Glasgow and in the developing textile centre of Paisley, where some of the most prominent evangelicals lived." Ned C. Landsman, "Presbyterians and Provincial Society: The Evangelical Enlightenment in the West of Scotland, 1740-1775," in *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, eds. John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1993), 194-95.

[603] See on Galt's writings on America and Canada with regard to opportunities for the British settlers in

Burke's system, Galt represented change in economic rather than hierarchical or political terms. Galt can be perceived as a social historian, as well writing economic history from time to time, since he was also interested in improving living-standards. He clearly made his case for the present and material change. However, he was saddened by the decline of Scottish traditions and belief.

Galt agreed that the heritage of the past was of crucial importance for a people's identity. However, this did not give him a classicist's attitude. The ancients played an important role in the thought of the neo-classical eighteenth century and continued to have their impact on the nineteenth-century mind. This impact could be seen in all sorts of intellectual pursuits, including literature and history. However, according to Galt, the past was neither avoidable nor just a means to look back and be proud. It served as the foundation for the present. The past had to be accepted as it was and not looked upon in a nostalgic way, as being a golden age. In *Voyages and Travels* Galt pronounced: "Antiquity is a wrinkled and aged dame; and it is only by her tales that she interests us."[604] Thus in contrast to some classicist minds, who adored the high quality and achievements of the ancients, Galt preferred present affairs and persons to the ancients. Similarly, in *Letters from the Levant*, he declared to a correspondent: "Although I am very willing to allow the ancients to have been very extraordinary persons, yet you know that I have always thought but little of their great affairs, and particularly of their most famous characters, compared to the great affairs and famous characters of the moderns."[605]

Charles E. Shain, "John Galt's America," *American Quarterly* 8 (3) (Autumn, 1956): 254-63.

[604] Galt, *Voyages and Travels in the Years, 1809, 1810, and 1811, containing, Commercial and Miscellaneous Observations on Gibraltar, Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, Serigo and Turkey* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1812), 175.

[605] Galt, *Letters from the Levant; Containing Views of the State of Society, Manners, Opinions, and Commerce in Greece and Several of the Principal Islands of the Archipelago* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1813), 181, 130.

His interest in modern times and persons, however, did not allow him to neglect of the past, however rude and vulgar it was. His interest in preserving the social order and Scottish traditions were not in opposition to his desire to support the new man of commerce and developments in agriculture and industry. He favoured a material development of Scotland. Change and progress, as long as they came naturally, at their own pace, were always welcomed. His critics mostly agreed that "of the changes in country towns and rural districts, as well as in social life, nowhere can be found such vivid and accurate pictures as in Galt's *Annals, Provost* and *Entail.*"[606] Thus, from his writings there emerges a general framework outlining changes in society and, in particular, in such areas as wealth and education. This picture, from time to time, reflects the changes in traditions and mentalities of individuals. This last aspect of his portrayal sheds light on his regret when he observed the loss of manners that had contributed to national distinctiveness. Perhaps this constituted the didactic aspect of his writings.

7.1 Progress of Commerce and Transition

Galt said about his *Annals,* which dealt with the western parts of Scotland, that it was "a kind of treatise on the history of society."[607] The main character of the book is a minister who is truly Scottish and loyal to the Crown. The work demonstrates a progress, which is hard and complex, mostly unpredictable and not controlled by men. It is completely compatible with what Fergusson spoke of: "Every step and every movement of the multitude, even in what are termed enlightened ages, are made with equal blindness to the

[606] Gray Graham, *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, 536 cited in William Roughead, *Fatal Countess and Other Studies* (Edinburgh: n.g., 1924), 270**.**

future; and nations stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of any human design."[608] In nineteenth-century Britain progress was possible if personal morality and technical innovation developed together. Within this perspective bribery, drinking and such vulgar habits came to be regarded as archaic if not anti-social. Along with theories of progress, Galt's history of society spoke of the division of labour and the development of working places and cities, as well as the change in the manners and morality, which was not always to the good.[609] Commercial development did not bring only good results, but a loss of values in the society, and bad habits, that grew out of the use of luxury goods, could also prevail.

One of the reasons that Galt had for thinking positively about change was surely his tendency to believe in progress. Though not deified, as in the writings of many physiocrats and later economists, commercial and industrial progress was an article of Galt's belief. Although not technically directly involved with commerce, his works in general reflect a belief in civilisation's progress through the rise of commerce. The general conviction was, as in the writings of Hume and Smith, that the history of civilisation was to be shaped by the civilizing powers of commerce.[610] According to Hume, commercial society was progressive and the fact was that English society when compared to that of other nations was more developed, due to its commercial advantage over those other nations. Commerce, in its nature, had brought an equitable spreading of benefits: it distributed the benefits amongst all persons who had their share in it and was

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[607] This was the subtitle of the *Annals*.
[608] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 1995), 25.
[609] Harvie, "Revolution," 473-74.
[610] Nicholas Phillipson, *Hume* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1989), 16.

thus in harmony with each human nature.[611] It promoted an increase in wealth and civil peace within the nation.[612]

Galt himself was very interested in trade, having been himself raised and educated for it. He combined his literary talent with commerce – as he was always involved in some commercial occupation - which were not incompatible according to him. Like Scott he thought that the belief that literary pursuits were incompatible with commercial or "more active pursuits of life" was not true. [613] Galt's endeavours, although not his writings, shows an identity with Adam Smith's interest in this topic. He was, in general, interested in finding out the origins and development of institutions and taxes, such as tithes in Britain.[614] He was interested in the history of Bank of Scotland; he pursued a rigorous program of antiquarian research in the British Museum, which he mentioned to John Reid who promised to get him the archives of the Bank of England.[615] Likewise his first serious article was a "Statistical Account of Upper Canada," published in 1807, in which he gathered all available statistical information about Upper Canada for the use of immigrants.[616]

Like Walter Scott, Galt depicted contemporary society as awakening from a long sleep induced by economic stagnation under a tenacious but declining feudal social order.[617] As Balwhidder pointed out in the *Annals* in many passages, there was a

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[611] Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 251.
[612] David Hume, "Of Commerce," in *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. E. F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1987), 160.
[613] See Scott to Galt, 16 July 1812, Abbotsford quoted in Ian Gordon, *John Galt, the Life of a Writer* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1972), 14.
[614] Galt, "Saxon Chronicles," *The Monthly Magazine* 51 (June 1821): 399.
[615] Galt to Blackwood, 1829, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4024, ff 177-78 and Galt to Alexander Young, Edinburgh, 18 March, 1835, University of Edinburgh Library, Galt Letters, La II 509, f. 526.
[616] Galt, *Literary Life and Miscellanies of John Galt*, vol. 2 (2 vols, Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1834), 36.
[617] Keith Costain, "The Spirit of the Age and the Scottish Fiction of John Galt," *The Wordsworth Circle* 11 (1980): 98.

submission to the authority of progress induced by the increase in trade. In the *Annals* and the *Provost* and in his other works, he emphasised the dynamism of a commercial society. Galt depicted the agricultural improvement brought about by new technology and scientific method (which became especially more popular with Henry Kames's efforts); the new industrial developments in towns and the increased variety of work outside agriculture in the countryside; and a decline in piety as being the distinguishing features of late eighteenth-century society. In order to depict these, Galt composed his histories around individual characters who held certain occupations within society and they accordingly described social change from their own perspective.

Galt described a transitional period in which both the good and bad sides of material improvement could be seen.[618] Here rational ideas existed side by side with irrationalities and the remains of the old social system, like smuggling, the lairds, and superstition. According to his history in *the Provost* and *the Annals*, smuggling was an important characteristic of this transitional period during the second half of the eighteenth century. This phase started before the agricultural improvements took place. Smuggling was regarded as a significant component of a transition preceding agricultural and commercial development. High taxes on some goods from abroad allowed for smuggling, of which Galt must have first become aware when working in the custom-house.[619] Smuggling epitomised the bad developments changes could bring about.

In the year 1761, the minister, Balwhidder of the *Annals*, informs the reader about the smuggling trade and that, as a devout Christian, as often as he can, he

[618] *The Entail* is depicted a novel where a transition is negotiated, see Mark Schoenfield, "The Family Plots: Land and Law in John Galt's *The Entail*," *Scottish Literary Journal* 24 (1997): 60-65.
[619] Carey H. Kaplan, *John Galt and the Scottish Novel* (Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts, 1972), 265.

suppresses it. He reports that the great "smuggling trade corrupted all the west coast"[620]and tells how the king's men opened a war at sea and land against it. He regarded the smuggling of products, such as tea and brandy, as a pest. His account not only gives dates for the history of smuggling but also points out some of its social consequences. He systematically preached from the scripture against it, mentioning the increase in drunkenness and debauchery that accompanied smuggling. The decline of virtue and prudence, according to the minister, was another outcome of smuggling. "The evil got among us, and we had no less than three contested bastard bairns upon our hand at one time." (*Annals,* 12)

However, Balwhidder is not to slow to realize that some of the products which arrived by smuggling were welcome. Some of the products that came in with smuggling created, to some extent, changes in the daily life and habits of the parish. Drinking of tea, for instance, became far more widespread. "Before this year, drinking of tea was little known in the parish, saving among a few of the heritor's houses on a Sabbath evening, but now it became very rife."(*Annals*, 12) And soon tea became a part of everyday life. Tea, although the minister was suspicious of it at first, proved to be one of the better sides of smuggling.

> I never could abide the smuggling, both on its own account, and the evils that grew there from to the country-side, I lost some of my dislike to the tea, …and we then had it for our breakfast in the morning at the manse, as well as in the afternoon. But what I thought most of it for was, that it did no harm to the head of the drinkers, which was not always the case with the possets that were in fashion before." (*Annals*, 19).

A second wave of smuggling, described again as the "wicked mother of many mischiefs," came in 1778. However, this time it caused less damage to the parish, as local

[620] Galt, *Annals of the Parish* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1978), 11. The following references to page

agriculture had improved to some extent and, more importantly, the government had become more vigorous and, perhaps, more powerful, in its suppression: "the king's ships…increased the trouble of the smugglers, whose wits in their turn were thereby much sharpened." Shortly after the smuggling revival, the government sent an exciseman to the parish.(*Annals*, 85)

The increase of smuggling accompanied by some commercial activity around the parish resulted in the growth of business and an increase in the wealth of the parishioners. One of those who benefited from this trade was for instance, Mrs Malcolm, a widow with five children, who took part in trading. From the year 1767 onwards, Balwhidder speaks several times about the "increase among us of worldly prosperity," about quiet and regular progress and improvement in the parish.[621] He repeatedly points out such changes as the establishment of a brewing house, the opening of new coal-heyghs, or the building of new roads.

However, these changes in the parish and the relief of such parishioners as Mrs Malcolm, although the minister does not always point it out directly, also had something to do with the evil smuggling. Progress was not only a result of well intentioned individuals, but grew also from the increase in commercial traffic and the surplus money that smuggling had provided. In 1764, for instance, a Glasgow spirit dealer opened the first change house for travellers, which the minister saw as the "immediate get and offspring of the smuggling trade." Soon afterwards, the money acquired from smuggling facilitated the opening of a number of inns, or change houses, providing accommodation for the increased traffic in that region. (*Annals*, 29, 54) The growth in wealth and trade

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numbers from the *Annals* will be given in brackets in the text.

[621] See for various quotations on this *Annals*, 39, 61,102, 114, 120, 154.

brought about progress in communication and travelling. Within eight years after the minister's appointment, the roads of the parish were renewed and by the end of 1789, parishioners were able to travel to Glasgow along a new route [the roads actually connected Galt's indented industrial town Cayenneville, which was an emerging new town at the outskirts of Dalmailing with Glasgow] "between breakfast and dinner time, a thing that could not, when I came to the parish, have been thought within the compass of man." (*Annals*, 32, 42, 121)

After the two periods of smuggling, in Balwhidder's terms, "all things in our parish were now beginning to shoot up into a great prosperity." (*Annals*, 39) Thus Galt's work was a description of a transitional period within society towards a more commercial and somewhat industrial stage. During such times, there were some evils afflicting society, such as smuggling. However, even these contributed to an increase of wealth.

7.2 Classes

Galt provided the reader with a deeper analysis of this historical view. Moir drew attention to the characters that Galt used in his works and explained that these were descriptions not only of ordinary individuals, but that they were representations of different classes in Scotland.[622] "His ministers, his magistrates, his landed proprietor, his merchants, his mechanics, his clowns are all portraitures, not so much of individuals as of classes."[623] Galt wrote about his interest in peasants to Wilkie, the famous Scottish

[622] Similarly Scott said that Galt gave the history of division of labour. Paul H. Scott, "The Development of Social and Economic Theories in Selected Fiction of John Galt" (M.A. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1987), 33.
[623] David M. Moir, "Biographical Memoir" of the Author," NLS, MSS. 9856/35, Miscellaneous, vii, xxxiv.

painter of the early nineteenth century, saying that he once considered writing about "peculiarities of conduct, opinion, and notions among the peasantry…in the colloquial manner of our ancient humorous ballads."[624] His interest was revealed once more when he explained that *Andrew Wylie* "was meant to belong to that series of pictures of national manners in which classes are represented by individuals…They all form a portion of a gallery." This description of Scottish society and its social orders was of particular importance. Galt, like most of his contemporaries, recognised that society and manners, especially after the French Revolution, underwent a greater degree of change than had been the case for a very long time before. Moir remarked that this picture of the peculiarities and situations of the late eighteenth-century Scottish classes renders a perspective on Scottish history that will always be invaluable.[625] While reflecting on the social classes, Galt preferred the productive classes, such as merchants, workers and industrial investigators, as they were at the hearts of the civilizing power.

Galt's novels taken as a whole reflect the shift of power from the aristocracy and gentry to a wider nation, that is from "nation of gentlemen" to a heterogeneous nation.[626] Galt treated the lairds as a part of the past; they were diminishing in stature and were not dynamic parts of his contemporary society.[627] He did not like the military and opposed

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First published as preface to John Galt, *Annals of the Parish* and *The Ayrshire Legatees* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1841), xxiv.

[624] Galt to Wilkie, NLS, Miscellaneous Letters, MS 9835, ff. 15-16.

[625] Moir, "Biographical Memoir," lx , xxvi, xxvii.

[626] "Nation of Gentlemen" borrowed from Augustin Tierry quoted in Lionel Gossman, "History and Literature," in *The Writing of History, Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, eds. Robert H Canary and Henry Kozicki (London, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 87. J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure, and PoliticalPractice During the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), 91-118.

[627] Galt's response might be to the continuing power of the ancient elite of aristocrats and lairds, despite Scottish urbanisation and industrialisation. For their importance see Thomas M. Devine, ed., *Scottish Elite: Proceedings of the Scottish Historical Studies Seminar, University of Strathclyde 1991-2* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publications, 1994), vii-viii; Devine, *Lairds and Improvement in the Scotland of the Enlightenment: Essays* (Glasgow: n. g., 1979)

the dominance of the landed interest over the developing market and industry. In *the Member*, which is the story of the Scottish Tory MP, Archibald Jobbry, a young schoolteacher said, "the great properties have had their day: they are the relix of the feudal system when the land bore all public burderns."[628] The *Annals* again spoke clearly of the declining importance of the landed gentry. They were depicted to some extent as an obstacle to innovation and development. They belonged to an unproductive part of the society. They had the capital, but their "family pride" prevented them from investing it in trade and thus "sunk into divors for the sake of their genteelity." However, what was worse was that they envied the developments taking place in the workers' lives.

> Some of the ancient families, in their turreted houses, were not pleased with this innovation, especially when they saw the handsome dwellings that were built for the weavers of the mills, and the unstinted hand that supplied the wealth required for the carrying on of the business. It sank their pride into insignificance, and many of them would almost rather have wanted the rise that took place in the value of their lands, than have seen this incoming of what they called o'er sea speculation. (*Annals*, 120, 118)

Change was, however, inevitable: Balwhidder's patron, the Laird of Breadlands, dies and his family moves away to Edinburgh. After that, Mr Gilchrist, who belongs to the nouveau riche, gradually takes power in the village. The patronage system continues but, like most of the gentry, the new patron, Lord Eaglesham, lives in London and, ironically, he is, too, soon to die there. Mr Cayenne, who gained all his money in the Colonies returns to Scotland during the American Revolution, and as a result of his investment and endeavours, a new town is build on the outskirts of Dalmailing with factories and mills. He becomes the example of the entrepreneur businessman who voluntarily invests his gains in a profitable industrial development. He lacked propriety

[628] Galt, *The Member: An Autobiography* And *The Radical: An Autobiography* (Edinburgh. Canongate, 1996), 141.

and decorum. He "being a man of great activity, though we thought him, for many a day, a serpent plague sent upon the parish, he proved thereby one of our greatest benefactors." (*Annals,* 118) Following the general story of social mobility, Galt depicts a changing social hierarchy with a favourable view of a man who invested and had made money in trade. A similar change is also shown taking place in *The Provost*. Pawkie remarks

> For a long period of time, I had observed that there was a gradual mixing in of the country gentry among the town's folks … We discovered that they were vessels made of ordinary human clay; so that, instead of our reverence for them being augmented by a freer intercourse, we thought less and less of them, until, poor bodies, the bit prideful lairdies were just looked down upon by our gawsie big-bellied burgesses, not a few of whom had heritable bonds on their estates.[629]

Here some characters were caught in between, such as Claud Walkinshaw, the laird of *The Entail*. He loses his father and his land after the Darien Scheme disaster. Claud grew up as a merchant adventurer, bought back his land in order to prevent its division and agreed to an entail. Like James Pawkie, the provost, Claud was selfish and clever in making profit. However, it was his ambition to get his lost lands back and preserving his family continuity on it, that was the beginning of his family's decline. Ambition to landed status belonged to the mentality of the old system. In general, however, in Galt's works the approved characters of the late eighteenth century worked in and thought about business.

7.3 Improvement

According to Galt, as mentioned in the forth chapter, change was to be handled with care and never to be forced on society. Only this careful attitude could prevent violent

revolutions. The social system was already on a pace of its own for change; Little reforms could be undertaken in order to facilitate, but not to force change. Obstacles to change, like great reforms, however, were of equal danger. Lairds, in a sense, were obstacles to change. In some articles Galt wrote, he attacked the gentry for being inhuman and refractory in opposition to change.[630] They were both unwilling to invest and utilise new farming techniques, whereas Coulter and Kibbock, the two proponents of new agricultural methods in the *Annals*, are praised for their wisdom and industriousness.[631] Kibbock, the minister's second father-in-law, was the first man to speculate in new farming ways in Ayrshire: he planted trees and specialised in dairy-farming. The minister later described Coulter's coming to the parish as a gift of God. Coulter who was "of extraordinary accomplishment in the agricultural line." He built a new farm on the old laird's property, which had burned down, and, according to the minister, proved "to do more for the benefit of my people than if the young laird had rebuild the Breadland House in a fashionable style, as was at one time spoken of." This man came "from Edinburgh, and had got his insight among the Lothian farmers, so that he knew what crop should follow another," and was a good example for other farmers in increasing their production. Although a newcomer, he demonstrated how to increase productivity "and it was wonderful what an increase he made the land bring forth." (*Annals*, 32, 36, 39)

Soon the spirit of agricultural improvement got an upper hand over the spirit of smuggling. Mr Kibbock's daughter, the second Mrs Balwhidder, "had [likewise] a geni for management, and it was extraordinary what she could go through." (*Annals*, 30-31)

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629 Galt, *The Provost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 105-06.

630 Galt, "Hints to the Country Gentlemen, In a letter to C. North, Esq." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 12 (1822): 482-91, and "Hints to the Country Gentlemen, Letter II," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 12 (1822): 624-32.

631 They both develop such methods bringing an orderly appearance to the landscape and an increase in

Galt uses his depiction of Mrs Balwhidder comment on the domestic improvements of the period.[632] As with her father and Mr Coulter, her example animates others:

> I began to discern that there was something as good in her example, as the giving of alms to the poor told. For all the wives of the parish were stirred up by it into a wonderful thrift, and nothing was … heard of in every house, but of quilting and wabs to weave; insomuch, that before many years came round, there was not a better stocked parish, with blankets and napery, than mine was, within the bounds of Scotland. (*Annals,* 31)

She soon started of to sell her sheets and cheese in the neighbouring markets. It was her industriousness that enabled the Balwhidders after their first year of marriage to put his entire stipend into the bank, a detail which illustrates how one eighteenth century family engaged in the accumulation of capital.[633] Thus, for Galt, the power of progress was in the hands of improvers.

7.4 Cities, Towns and Parishes

In a sense, the towns display, for Galt, extremes both in terms of lifestyles and professions. Good and evil exist in the parishes and small towns certainly, but Edinburgh and Glasgow are different. According to Galt, progress could be achieved and realised more fully in cities than in rural parishes. Among the cities, he had his preferences, namely towns with factories that made contributions to the development of industry and trade, instead of cities like Edinburgh.[634] He described his disdain for Edinburgh and its

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agricultural production in agriculture. See, *Annals,* 32 and 36.

[632] Buchan, "Galt's *Annals*: Treatise and Fable," in *Nineteenth Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays*, ed. Ian Campbell (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1979), 23.

[633] Buchan, "Galt's *Annals,*" 26.

[634] See for a description of intellectual life in Edinburgh in, *Majolo: a Tale,* vol. 2 (London: T. Faulkner, Sherwood, 1816), 96, 105.

intellectual snobbery in a letter to William Blackwood.[635] In such cities, there was only the intellectual. This of course had value for him, but alone could not achieve much. As the basis of civilisation was in trade and production, Galt preferred industrial and mercantile cities like Glasgow, Paisley and Greenock or his imaginary Cayenneville in the *Annals*. These places (including London perhaps) were open to material and cultural improvements. They accepted variety and change.[636] They had, as Andrew Pringle, young son of the Pringle family in the *Ayrshire Legatees*, observed "a plurality of systems."[637]

Galt did not disregard agriculture and rural parishes. They had their own role within the growing and alienating forces of commercial and industrial society.[638] He described cities from the perspective of small town or parish inhabitants. The Pringle family went to London from a small western Scotland parish, or, in the *Gathering of the West*, a family from a small place in west of Scotland went to Edinburgh for the coronation of George IV, and such events were used to demonstrate social and cultural difference more acutely. In the city people were more prone to change and better able to adapt to it. However, we cannot see any differences between city dwellers and those living in smaller communities, to the discredit of the latter. Both places have their positive and negative sides. First of all, the countryside is of great importance because agriculture was still the major industry for Scotland and England. The only demand on the countryside was that innovation should not always be regarded with a suspicious, conservative outlook. When new farming techniques were used it was very profitable and

[635] Galt to Blackwood, 30 January 1821, NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS 4006, f. 219.
[636] Costain, "Spirit of the Age," 101.
[637] Galt, "Letter XVII: Andrew Pringle to the Rev. Mr. Charles Snodgrass," *The Ayrshire Legatees* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1978), 67.
[638] He explained that failure of agriculture will necessarily effect the national industry and wealth. Galt,

new agricultural products could become important. The major difference between the decades, Balwhidder realises during his stay in the parish, was that people in the cities, although embracing a lot more freedom and innovation, tended to experience more loneliness and unhappiness. As a result, one of the major duties of modern man was not to lose his spirituality. "We live, as it were, within the narrow circle of ignorance, we are spared from the pain of knowing many an evil; and , surely, in much knowledge, there is sadness of heart."(*Annals*, 125)

7.5 Religion

Religion plays a great part in Galt's writing about Scottish history, for his conviction was that most of the morals and manners in Scottish society had their origin in Presbyterianism. He started, in his *Ringan Gilhaize*, with the Scottish Reformation and John Knox, then took the story in the same book, as far as end of seventeenth century, to the Covenanting period. These were the harsh and bloody years in Scottish history, in which heresy (in the form of Erastianism) increased and strict resistance to Anglicanism and conformity to the Presbyterian denomination characterised the last decades of the seventeenth century.[639] It became a war to preserve the long established orthodoxy of the Lowlands.

His history continues with another important period for the Church of Scotland. This started with Mr Balwhidder's coming to his parish. He was placed in the parish of Dalmailing in the same year that George III ascended to the throne, in 1760, and he remained there till 1810. He was a moderate clergyman, and perhaps could be called one of the last Moderates, educated in the "Orthodox University of Glasgow." His initial

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"On the Agricultural Distresses," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (October 1822): 436, 436-40.
[639] Thomas M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation, 1700-2000* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 64.

placement in the parish as a minister by his patron, the Laird of Breadland, was resisted by the parishioners, as they resented the placement of a minister whom they did not know nor elect. This went so far as trying to keep him out of the Kirk by nailing the Kirk's door shut. (*Annals*, 2, 13) On the side of the Moderates, he found it, at first, hard to become accepted by the parishioners. Until social change led him to compromise his beliefs, he was a devoted member of the Moderate Church party.

He had many of the manners of the old Calvinist past and thus was employed by Galt as part of a gradualist history.[640] Like the seventeenth-century believers, he thought that he was guided by a special Providence; but that was going to diminish towards the belief in general Providence, as has been previously discussed. The discipline in the belief that special Providence guided every individual is evident in almost all his books. The decrease in the belief in special Providence from Ringan to the Pringle family is dramatic. If philosophical thinking and reason could not reveal truths, then revelation, by opening a realm which cannot be apprehended through our normal ways of knowing, could. He justifies and makes an analysis of revelation in a rational manner. Through this intuitive insight, men come to know God and the body of truth revealed by God. Certainly, Galt still believed that everything was regulated by the hand of God; but individuals showed more respect to history when they took equal responsibility in the historic drama with Providence. Obviously the commercial system increased the conviction that a man's life was regulated by his choices and historic coincidences.[641]

Old beliefs went through changes and special Providence took another form in the new commercial age. Balwhidder had to succumb to change. The Kirk was of central

[640] William M. Brownlie, *John Galt: Social Historian* (*The Parish of Dalmailing 1760-1810)*. John Galt Lecture*,* 1951 (Greenock: Telegraph Printing Works, 1952), 7.

importance to the community in Dalmailing, but it entered into a "relaxation of ancient discipline" and accepted "conformity with the altered fashions of the age…the Session came to an understanding with me that we should not inflict the common church censures." These were commuted to fines. Occasional baptisms in private houses were found acceptable. (*Annals*, 167) Likewise he changed burial customs, as they caused difficulties for poor families. (*Annals*, 153) He eventually began to regard these changes as leading to the weakening of the Presbyterian "simplicity" and "integrity." (*Annals*, 122, 126, 167) In any case, change was inevitable; but the culture or the morality that remained should still be based on Calvinist legacy. Ashton noted that Mr Macindoe in *Bogle Corbet* exemplified the shift of power from the Kirk to a secular community.[642] Here Galt associates the free will doctrine with radical politics, implying that Calvinistic determinism and Toryism went hand in hand.[643]

However, Galt also underlines the fact that during transitional periods, beliefs and ideas that belonged to the past still lived on. In *The Omen* for instance, his character believes in his supernatural vision and instincts. This in a sense was the declaration that the mental faculties of human beings were not yet ready to overcome superstition, although there was the possibility to attain more knowledge about the nature of things, especially with the help of the hints from God's revealed scripture. In the mean time, society was far from having erased every remnant superstition.

Scott liked Galt's observation: "Why are we so averse to confess to one another, how much we in secret acknowledge to ourselves, that we believe the mind to be

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[641] Galt, *Bogle Corbet ; or, The Emigrants*, vol. 1 (2 vols. London : n. g., 1831), 8.
[642] *Bogle Corbet* is also depicted as Galt's work exemplifying his vision of progress, Robert Graham, "John Galt's *Bogle Corbet*: A Parable of Progress," *Scottish Literary Journal* 13 (November 1986): 31-47.
[643] W. Ashton, "Regional Realism in Four Novels By John Galt" (M.A. Thesis, University of Guelph,

endowed with other faculties of perception than those of the corporeal senses…It may be that our soul never sleeps, and what we call dreams are but the endeavours which it makes, during the trance of the sense."[644] Galt's view of the contemporary stage of religion was constituted by the observation of a combination of the old with the new. Toleration had increased to a certain extent. Through the Evangelical movement, there was a greater tendency towards an individualistic piety. Even Micah Balwhidder did not interfere directly with the Quakers who "were merely passing through." Some communities had begun to establish their own churches and were demanding a minister able to meet their needs, or as Balwhidder put it, to gratify "their own ignorant fancies." (*Annals*, 137-139) Another continuity from the past was the anti-Catholic position; but the end of this too was envisaged the *Annals* end with Balwhidder's comment:

> The time will come to pass when the tiger of Papistry shall lie down with the lamb of Reformation, and the cultures of Prelacy be as harmless as the Presbyterian doves, when the Independent, the Anabaptist, and every other order and denomination of Christians, not forgetting even those poor wee wrens of the Lord, the Burghers and Anti-burghers, will pick from the hand of patronage, and dread no snare. (*Annals*, 187)

This view of religion was clearly related to a perception of a society in transition, involving the presence of characteristics of two stages of society at the same time, one dependent on agriculture, in which commerce did not take a leading role and another developed society, in which trade had a bigger share and industry started to increase.

7.6 The Bad and Good Effect of Progress

1979), 68.

[644] Walter Scott, "*The Omen*," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 20 (1826), quoted in Ioan Williams, ed., *Sir Walter Scott on Novelists and Fiction* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), 302.

The aim of the *Annals*, according to its critic Buchan, was to depict social change. Galt was interested in the process of change, the interaction of people and the events that made up social change.[645] In the *Annals*, Galt wrote a history of a small parish, while it was joining the greater world. Wars, commerce and an increase of industry break down borders and extend their limits. This allowed for an increase in knowledge and wealth, but also the exposure to greater evils into their locality.

> And during the first term of the present just and necessary contest for all that is dear to us as a people, although, by the offswarming of some of our restless youth, we had our part and portion in common with the rest of the Christian world; yet still there was at home a great augmentation of prosperity, and everything had thriven in a surprising manner; somewhat, however, to the detriment of our country simplicity. By the building of the cotton-mill, and the rising up of the new town of Cayenneville, we had intromitted so much with concerns of trade, that we were become a part of the great web of commercial reciprocities, and felt in our corner and extremity every touch or stir that was made on any part of the texture." (*Annals,* 179-180)

Balwhidder realises that the changes, which were bringing benefits to his parish, could also affect people in a more negative way. By 1791 he had already noticed changes in working conditions, enlargement of the commercial and social traffic with the greater world and the increase in wealth, which encouraged material ambitions among his flock. "In that same spirit of improvement, which was so busy everywhere, I could discern something like a shadow, that shewed it was not altogether of that pure advantage, which avarice led all so eagerly to believe." Living in a rural parish brought some limits to the lifes of the inhabitants in terms of development. They "live, as it were, within the narrow circle of ignorance." However, this, the minister realised, "spared [them] from the pain of

[645] Buchan, "Galt's *Annals*," 25, 26.

knowing many an evil." He assured his readers that he was convinced that "in much knowledge, there is sadness of heart."

Consequently he decided that the only thing in his power was "to keep my people contented with their lowly estate." And the only means in his hand was again a series of sermons "on the evil and vanity of riches." At other times, he

> pointed out in what manner they [riches] led the possessor to indulge in sinful luxuries, and how indulgence begat desire, and desire betrayed integrity and corrupted the heart, making it evident, that the rich man was liable to forget his unmerited obligations to God, and to oppress the laborious and the needful when he required their service. (*Annals*, 126)

These remarks, unfortunately, were misunderstood, leading to accusations that he was a Leveller.

Surely the times, as the *Annals* show, were good in material terms, as increasing trade and traffic with the rest of the country brought some practical changes and jobs. But the dark side of the recently introduced capital was especially noticeable in Glasgow. In the splendour of improvement, he could see that in the city, people's faces were pale, sad and melancholic. Industrial developments made people sickly, more prone to physical and mental illness, and worst of all, loss of hope and faith.

As time passed, this trend did not reverse, but, on the contrary, worsened. In 1795 the minister remarked that the increase in luxuries brought a greater variety of temptations, leading to increasing differences between social orders. "We were doubtless brought more into the world, but we had a greater variety of temptations set before us,

and there was still jealousy and strangement in the dispositions of the gentry and the lower orders, particularly the manufacturers." (*Annals,* 126, 125, 139)

Another important problem was the population's increasing dependency on industry and trade, partly the result of population increase and scarcity of agricultural work. As a matter of fact, now any decline in trade or industry would create greater misfortunes. An illustration was supplied by the bankruptcy of the cotton mill in Cayenneville: "on the Monday, when the spinners went to the mill, they were told that the company had stopped payment. Never did a thunderclap daunt the heart like this news, for the bread in a moment was snatched from more than a thousand mouths." Stricken, the minister laments "what could our parish fund do in the way of helping a whole town, thus suddenly thrown out of bread." (*Annals*, 197-200) He thereby underlined just how far commercial progress had outstripped the development of relevant social institutions: parish relief could not possibly cope with the unemployed of an entire town.[646] (*Annals,* 179-182) He concluded that "that love and charity, far more than reason or justice, formed the tie that holds the world, with all its jarring wants and woes, in social dependence and obligation together." (*Annals*, 143-4)

Some other outcomes of increasing prosperity though were more promising, since increasing purchasing power increased the possibilities of learning and getting informed about the world. "[M]ankind read more, and the spirit of reflection and reasoning was more awake then than at any time within my remembrance." Scotland was connected to the bigger Britain: a bookseller opened in Cayenneville, with a London daily newspaper, magazines and review and other new publications. Material improvement facilitated the

[646] Ibid., 27.

penetration of knowledge which would contribute to the intellectual development of the people. This was very important since learning was the only way to outgrow superstition. This leads us back again to the discussion of the stage of the society in history.

In Galt's works descriptions were not made on a stable canvas: he always tried to portray the flow of history. In contrast, Scott wrote in a romantic manner where the past could be represented in a complete story, which created an unbridgeable gap between the past and the present. In his novel *Waverley*, the Highlanders were a community of noble savages of another stage:

> The grim, uncombed and wild appearance of these men, most of whom gazed with all the admiration of ignorance upon the most ordinary production of domestic art, created surprise in the Lowlands, but it also created terror… as if an invasion of African Negroes, or Esquimaux Indians, had issued forth from the northern mountains of their own native country.[647]

Galt had no patience with idleness, nor was he interested in savage appearance, but rather, he was concerned with practical matters and changes. His remarks about Greece exemplify the point. According to Galt, in the early nineteenth century, the Greeks idly relied on their past accomplishments instead of making something new for their present stage of development.[648] The past was an inseparable part of the present and it was not merely something to be proud of, but nations and individuals needed to build their society on it. Tradition and learning, hand in hand, could facilitate the development of any society. His description of the stages of Scottish society, discussed above, becomes more striking when compared with his travel writings about the southern European countries and the north American colonies.

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[647] The African clans and Eskimos were usually referred to as societies living still under conditions of early stages of civilisation. Walter Scott, *Waverley: or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814, London: Penguin Classics, 1972), 324.

To portray stages it was important to travel and see new places, even if just within Scotland. Balwhidder reflects certainly Galt's ideas after some of his trips around the country. "I [went], to divers places and curiosities in the county, that I had not seen before, by which our ideas were greatly enlarged; indeed, I have always had a partiality for travelling, as one of the best means of opening the faculty of the mind, and giving clear and correct notions of men and things." (*Annals*, 143-4, 180, 162) Certainly, Galt's own travels influenced his social observations, by increasing the range of subjects he encountered, far surpassing the limitations of parochial life. Galt's travel literature further engaged him in observations about the history of stages in the colonies and the Levant. One of his important observations was that one of the results of the rapidly growing and progressing society in Europe was some scarcity of jobs and space for a part of the society, to which the colonies brought some relief.

7.7 The Colonies and The Levant

Galt's interest on manners and their description is made evident in his travel writing and thoughts in the colonies.[649] These travel writings actually completed his discussion, making a comparative point of view between Britain and other nations' stages possible. After his return, he stated to Constable, his publisher that "[a]t intervals since my return from abroad I have been drawing at a series of adventures in the form of a novel calculated to afford opportunities of describing manners, characters and scenes in the

[648] These remarks might have been an attitude to the "Doric Nationalism," and classicism in Edinburgh already mentioned in the Introduction rather than a direct criticism of the Greek culture.
[649] For example see Galt, "Bandana on Colonial Undertakings," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (August 1826): 304-08.

different countries I visited."[650] His attempt to describe foreign lands conveys national characteristics, geographical and climate differences. His experience was important for his gaining insight into the past. Since all societies were not at the same stage of civilization, visiting other countries had a time travelling dimension and facilitated the method of conjecture.

Galt's travel writings can be read as a complementary view of the different stages of society in Scotland. They reflect his sense of relativity and his efforts to understand "the nature of climate and country."[651] Geography and climate were believed to play an important role forming the conscience of people living in a particular region and allowed interesting comparative themes for Enlightenment writers like Montesquieu and Temple, who had popularised the belief. Particularly important was the distinction and contrast between the east and the west and between Europe and America.

According to Galt the colonies were the outcome of developments in Europe. It was colonisation, he said, of all of his topics, that he thought about the most.[652] The colonies were places that brought a certain relief to the old continent, with its high population, unemployment and poor conditions. For many they were places to which to escape. There was a "creation of another continent" for the relief of the oppressed of the old.[653] On the one hand the colonies supplied the mother country with resources and material wealth, and on the other hand, they eased the population pressure in Britain. Especially during times of war, such as during the Napoleonic Wars, the colonies proved

[650] Galt to Constable, Greenock, 8 December 1818, NLS, Miscellaneous Letters, MS 682, f. 78.
[651] Borrowed from Oliver Goldsmith, *An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1759), 95.
[652] For a treatment of emigration in *Bogle Corbet* see, Susanne Bach, "'A Nation of Emigrants:' Eine Historische-Soziologische Kontextualisierung der Auswanderungsthematik in John Galt's *Bogle Corbet*," *Zeitschrift Für Kanada-Studien* 16 (1996): 58-79.
[653] *Literary Life,* vol. 2, 36.

to be of great importance. Wars were, as a matter of fact, the outcome of different levels of progress between societies. According to Galt, there were two reasons for war: one was the high population density and scarcity of employment for youth and the other reason was the need to protect the increased of wealth of nations. The horrible sight of young people as soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars led him to this conclusion and made him think further on the ancients. This, he says,

> caused me to see a utility in the magnificent follies of the ancients, - something which made them venerable as monuments of a blind political wisdom. Pyramids, walls of China, and Babylonian towers, became hallowed as expedients of great statesmen, to employ the population of nations in periods of tranquillity, and they thenceforth, for ever in my mind, ceased to be regarded as the prodigality of ostentatious kings. Thus the mighty labours of the ancients served a public purpose, and the development of commercial and manufacturing systems, subsequently developed creating a further necessity of protection. Thus the employment of men to the profession of arms emerged. The flow of history, thereafter, showed a growth of population and simultaneously a flowing westward. On the contrary to the militancy of the old, though, there was growth of Christian principles, a race was growing up inclined to sedateness and peace.[654]

For many the colonies were a fresh start. They awarded a relief to the old world and in addition were an example of circumstances of a previous stage. Thus, he added, there was no place for idleness and those who wanted to move to the colonies were to start from the very early stages of a civilisation and take up agricultural occupations. For instance, he viewed Canada as still being an imperfectly formed society, like the Highlands. Labour distribution, trade and social conditions were weak and far behind Britain. He described the professions in Canada thus:

> While in England there is an endless variety of professions and occupation, in Canada there is, properly speaking, only *one*; or at least, that, excepting for a few of the simplest artisan employments, *farming*,

[654]Ibid., 36-38.

> and farming only should be looked to as the staple profession of all who mean to emigrate. The plans and enterprises that are connected with farming, and the raising of a new settlement, will always commend themselves to an active mind, but they bear no proportion to the stable concerns of the clearing of land and the raising of produce, to which a steady and rational mind ought to give its first attention. Though the various shades of folly, as to emigration, that grow out of the vices and discontent of an old country, ought to be discouraged, both as to their wild plans and extravagant hopes, yet it seems, after all, to be a general rule, in respect to this interesting field of human exertion, that any, or *every individual*, as Howison expresses it, "who to youth and health joins perseverance and industry, will eventually prosper."[655]

To advance the colonies beyond their primitive state, it was important to make use of some traditions and innovations of the old world. Galt, fully aware of this fact, supported the colonists in establishing an Agricultural Society in Upper Canada.[656]

Galt also wrote a series of essays called "Letters from New York," to the *New Monthly Magazine* about America. These were basically his experiences in New York and it gives the background or setting for his book *Lawrie Todd*, about settlers in America. His America was "depicted as a hospitable place, not exactly like England, but rich in opportunities for industrious settlers. Presumably the hope of financial success compensated for whatever shortcomings it might have."[657] Now, although *Lawrie Todd* does not draw any comparison between England and America, Galt did in his essays, paralleling his attitude in the novel. Accordingly, "nothing could be more absurd than to expect in a newly-settled country the delicacies of England."[658] America, for example, was a place that still needed to polish and refine itself. Americans had "unaccentuated

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[655] Howison published a book about Upper Canada in 1824. Andrew Picken, "Introduction," by John Galt in *The Canadas, As they at Present Commend Themselves to the Enterprise of Emigrants, Colonists, and Capitalists. Comprehending A Variety of Topographical Reports Concerning the Quality of the Land etc. in Different Districts: and the Fullest General Information: Compiled and Condensed From Original Documents Furnished by John Galt* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1832), 6.

[656] Leo A. Johnson, *History of Guelph* (Guelph: Guelph Historical Society, 1977), 22-23.

[657] These articles were added to the Galt bibliography by Linda Bunnell Jones, "John Galt: An Addition to His Bibliography," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 9 (July 1971): 57.

style" in conversation, a "phlegmatic character," their cuisine was primitive and they were poor in clothing and furnishing.[659] However, to such criticisms of tastelessness he did not neglect to add that Americans were neither weak not vain and that he admired the great progress they had made in establishing their cities.

As he used the colonies for contrast, Galt also contrasted, as most of his contemporaries did, the Ottoman lands and the southern Mediterranean with the northern part of the continent within the easy formula offered by stadialism.[660] He explained in a letter from Malta that his intention was not to visit archaeological sites but "to see the existing condition of the islands, the disposition of the inhabitants, and the products of their industry."[661] His main idea was to compare the life and the institutions of mankind under varying natural and political conditions with a view to ascertaining the relative advantages and disadvantages, if any, of their forms of government, climate, soil and other institutions.

He was curious about everything: schools, religion, etc, and how this effected the life of these people. In Malta Galt wrote his observations on the eastern Mediterranean world with an antiquarian sense of detail. He wrote about schools and how they were supported by taxes levied on everyone. He wrote too on folk literature. The difference in religion, the presence of Islam, made a great difference in terms of daily habits. He spoke of how the Muslim individual fell in love. Once after hearing a song about love, he inquired about how Muslims fell in love, since they were not allowed to see the faces of women. He asked his guide to translate the song that the coffee-house keeper sang:

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[658] Galt, "No III: Letters from New York," *New Monthly Magazine* 26 (1829): 450 cited in Jones, "Bibliography:" 57.
[659] Galt, "No. 1: New York:" 132 quoted in ibid.
[660] For Scottish perceptions of the orient see, Jane Rendall, "Scottish Orientalism: From Robertson to James

> Considering the poor Mahomedans are not permitted to see the faces of their mistresses, I was desirous to hear how their charms were celebrated [in the song]…It was related that, on a summer's day, two young Ottomans swains were smoking under a tree by the side of a purling stream, hearing the birds sing, and seeing the flowers in bloom. By came a young maiden, her eyes like two stars in the nights of the Ramazan. One of the swains takes his pipe from out of his mouth, and, sighing smoke, gazes at her with delight… "Her eyes are black but they shine like the polished steel, nor is the wound they inflict less fatal to the heart."

He also tried to ascertain what kind of effect the climate had. After observing several coffee houses, he began to think that the common architectural style had something to do with the climate. All of these coffee houses had provided a place for prayer and the provision of food, and grove and running water. He concluded, "the uniformity in the situations of the Asiatic public-houses…proves that there is something systematic in the choice. In a climate where shade and cool water are so often luxuries, the system does credit to the taste, or rather to the instinct, of the Turks."

He was also interested in the minority groups in the Ottoman cities. In Scalanova, he noted that the land "contains about twenty thousand inhabitant of whom five thousand are said to be Greeks about one hundred Armenians, and two hundred Jews; the remainder are Mahomedans." Wherever he was, he tried to place whatever he saw within a level of development and describe its characteristics. He made a detailed description of nomadic clothing and life styles, contrasting this observation with the lives of stable town and village dwellers.[662] He also tried to describe the differences between members of the same nation living in different geographies. Turks in Kirpi and Scio were "industrious and blameless people," when compared to the Turkish population in Athens and

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Mill," *The Historical Journal* 25 (March 1982), 43-69.
[661] Galt, *Letters from the Levant*, 1.
[662] Galt, "Letters from the Levant," in *A Tour in Asia, Comprising the Most Popular Modern Voyages and Travels* (London: J. Souter, 1820), 334, 339, 335, 337.

Tripolizza. He explained that in Athens Turks had a military character, whereas in Scio they were citizens of the world.

> Europe is not the proper country of that people. In their sentiments, conduct, and character, they have little in common with the other inhabitants. The Turk in Asia is very different from what he is in Europe. In Europe, he appears a stranger, nay more, a soldier on duty, jealous of stratagems, and fully under the pride-inspiring influence of the authority with which he is invested. In Asia he is more tame. He feels himself home. He is there industrious and patient; and though the arrogance and reserve of his nature is still unrestrained, he possesses many respectable qualities.[663]

In terms of the Ottoman Empire's level of development, he remarked, after a detailed analysis of land tenure, that "Turkey in Europe furnishes an idea of something like our notions of the feudal state of Christendom; but here everything contributes to transport the imagination back to the epoch of Charlemagne."

The Greeks, however, were described in a different manner. His biases, perhaps, about the Greek Orthodox came to fore:

> The character of the Greek has in it a great deal of a species of national vanity that exceedingly resembles family pride. This peculiarity, like the quality to which I have compared it, frequently leads to the expression of opinions that do not correspond to the ordinary sagacity and ability of those who are under its influence. The Greeks are almost as ignorant of the west of Europe as we are of them, and their notions of the magnificence of the Ottoman state and institutions are absolutely ridiculous. Respecting their ancestors, their ideas are almost as absurdly inflated as those of an Oxford or a Cambridge tutor. This national vanity renders a true Greek the most insufferable animal in the world, and I take great pleasure in pulling him down: I remind him of the subjugation of the Greeks by the Romans and of their degraded situation under the Turks, both of which facts I aver are positive proofs that with all their pretensions to superiority, they are an inferior race.[664]

He also categorised religious groups according to their stage of development. He certainly believed that the most advanced were the Protestant churches. They were

[663] Galt, *Letters from the Levant*, 256, 342.

followed by Islam. Orthodox and Catholic Christianity took their places at the bottom of the list. He explains that in the Ottoman lands, even Islam was "more rational and sublime" and more respectable compared to Catholicism. Soon after in his comparison between the Christian religion in Anatolia and Islam he went on to say that the Catholic Church was even more corrupt than the Byzantine Orthodox Church, which was "under the civil power."[665]

Thus, Galt upheld a stadialist view of history, in which Britain seems to have been regarded as the most developed nation. He saw Britain as undergoing a transition whereby the productive part of the society had gained the lead over the aristocratic and landed classes. The colonies had the role of giving relief to the old continent, whereas he described the Ottoman lands as still being at a feudal stage. Change was, however, the most crucial part of history and the success of a national history depended on adaptation to the relevant developments, which were not necessarily the result of individual endeavour, but a result of various vicissitudes and meeting of occasions.

[664] Ibid., 341-42, 345.
[665] Ibid., 343.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION
John Galt: A Perception of Scottish Enlightenment Views and History

Whatever he entered into,
he did enthusiastically and in earnest.
Moir, *Biography*, xx.

John Galt was blessed with a most retentive memory and a fund of energy. His capacity for work, right to the end of his life never failed. He represents a union of cultures, with which he became acquainted in Scotland, England and other places he visited during his life. From a local cultural environment, he entered into a wider cultural world by following his business career to London and Canada. His appreciation of different cultures grew with his confrontation with different life styles in the Mediterranean and these enabled him to acquire a higher comprehension of the concept of culture within a historical, stadialist and anthropological perspective, which had been much emphasised by the Scottish Enlightenment project. The perception of Galt by his critics was certainly influenced by the different cultural discourses of their times. His works were appreciated differently in relation to changing cultural meanings and literary genres. However, it has been agreed, Galt reflects an awareness and assimilation of Enlightenment ideas.

Galt, who received most of his formal and practical education in Scotland and was very much influenced by the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European intellectual inheritance, believed in the expediency of reason, learning and the possibility of human progress. His writings reveal that he never thought natural science and revealed

religion to be in conflict. He used the historical and social theories of the Enlightenment. Like Smith, Fergusson and Hume, he believed that industry, knowledge and humanity were linked together in a progressive movement. The organic structure of his ideas found reflection in his view of society and history. Like the major writers of the Science of Man project of the Scottish Enlightenment, being and occurrence were apprehended in unity; "its ideal is the system from which all and everything follows."[666]

In the early nineteenth century the Scottish Enlightenment had already lost its most vigorous adherents, and had accomplished its maturity. As a mature project its ideas had already been published many times in books and articles and had penetrated into the culture of men of letters. These were not only the publications of the Enlightenment philosophers but their ideas had been digested and they were accessible in a great variety of popular forms. In other words, the ideas of Scottish Enlightenment were available not only to a limited intellectual circle, but to a wider public. They were communicated to the public through popular novels, pamphlets, plays, newspapers and magazines, circulating through the many subscription libraries.[667] Galt, not being an active member of this project, is a good example of this wider reception of Scottish Enlightenment. On the common level radical convictions in favour of reform and the secularisation of Enlightenment writers merged with traditional or the new liberal conservative ideas and became a part of the habitual positions of men like Galt. As a result the borders between old and new manners and positions highlighted by Enlightenment intellectuals were

[666] Quoted from Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1973), 7.
[667] On popular works and their connections to politics and thoughts see Norbert J. Gossman, "Political and Social Themes in the English Popular Novel 1815-1832," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 20 (1956): 531-41.

blurred greatly in writers like Galt.[668] In such a context, or as Broadie puts it, in people as concrete historical individuals, the duality of Enlightenment and non-Enlightenment ideas faded away.[669]

Galt, in his writings, tried to catch the realism of the society that he was writing about. He did not produce didactic writings supporting the polite and fashionable manners and values of the time. The historic and national values of ordinary Scots were the accentuated by his novels. He was an important practitioner of the historical novel of that period, adhering to most of the approaches to this genre as put forward by Walter Scott.[670] Yet, his work rejected Smith's opinion, "It is the duty of a poet to write like a gentlemen. I dislike that homely style which some think fit to call the language of nature and simplicity."[671] Galt wrote of local manners in Scots dialect. It can be asserted that Galt believed, like Wordsworth, that characters should be "humble and rustic;" his subject matter was ordinary Scottish life, described in Scots, because thus, like Wordsworth had declared, "the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can find their maturity, are less under restraint and speak a plainer and more emphatic language."[672] The outcome was as Henri Gibrault generalises : "Souvent le

[668] For such dichotomies see David Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: The Eighteenth Century Experience* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964); Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985); and John Dwyer and Richard Sher (eds.), "Scotticism and the Problem of Cultural Identity in Eighteenth Century Britain," *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1993).
[669] Alexander Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment, The Historical Age of the Historical Nation* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), xi.
[670] See Chitnis, "Scottish Enlightenment" and C. A. Whatley, "Introduction," in *John Galt, 1779-1979,* ed. Whatley (Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head: 1979), 31-50 and 9-18.
[671] Quoted in David Craig, Craig, David. *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), 122.
[672] Wordsworth, "Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*," quoted in Laura Doyle, "The Radical Sublime", *Romanticism, Race and Imperial Culture, 1780-1834*, eds. Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 31-32.

roman écossaise concilie la persistance de l'identité locale avec la vision cosmopolite."[673] Most of Galt's critics admired him for his realistic depiction of his characters and ordinary life of the west of Scotland.

Galt's interests overlapped with much contemporary political and historical discussion. One of his major observations, as a man growing up in early nineteenth-century Scotland, was that imperfections in religious beliefs and misrepresentation of the past could cause the decline of a national self-consciousness. He was of the opinion that ignoring the past resulted necessarily in a loss of "social purpose and stability."[674] In his historical constructions he made use of the contemporary philosophical methods and history writing, such as historical inevitability and stadialism. With these he attached to the widely vulgarised rural Scottish society and to the Covenanters a national historical aspect and an expression of Scottish identity. He did not just freeze the past as a historical sphere, as the Highland history and society was perceived by his contemporaries, but saw the past as an indispensable part of the present. Thus Scotland's rebellious past could be offered as something to be admired, although not to be emulated, within the larger context of the Union with England. In embracing the west of Scotland's history, he delineated a national identity, constituted by the Scots language, the Presbyterian background founded on the Covenant and a commercialising society that connected Scotland to the British Empire.

Galt, thus not afraid of being called provincial, offered a localised view of history, a view of the west of Scotland with its local idioms and characters. He grew up in Ayrshire, a part of Scotland very much steeped in Scottish patriotism. In many instances,

[673] Henri Gibault, *John Galt: Romancier Ecossais* (Grenoble: L'Université des Langues et Lettres, 1979), 7.
[674] Costain, "The Spirit of the Age and the Scottish Fiction of John Galt." *The Wordsworth Circle* 11

when Galt was still very young, the freeholders of Ayr assumed "that they were the watchdogs of the Scottish constitution."[675] As Ayrshire was known for its patriotism so it was known for its Covenanters. Galt grew up in such a culture that gave him a concern with parochial life and culture and a respect for the religious belief of the Covenanters. To a certain extent, this was also what made him different from the mainstream. Like his contemporaries, he was influenced by foreign tastes in fashion, including intellectual fashion. He had a strong loyalty to the British Union, but when it came to matters of culture and national history, he reverted to his Scottishness. His regionalism, in this sense, did not conflict with his British imperial patriotism. Progress was inevitable and Scotland's development and obtaining of a place among the leaders of civilisation was seen possible within the Union and the British Empire. Industry was the remedy for the feudal social order and stagnation. He himself found meaning in opening up new colonies in the name of the Empire.

Rationalism, which had a diminished importance in the Scottish Enlightenment, found little support, in its radical sense, from Galt. He adhered to the belief that rationality and knowledge were of great importance to any human progress. However he did not find it difficult to unite this with belief in a Providential system. Reason was essentially limited in its nature and scope. Reason, at best, could try to understand, interpret and appreciate mundane truths; but only with divine revelation could further clues be obtained, for any greater understanding or knowledge of the universe. There are dogmas, revealed truths which were beyond reason, but not contrary to reason. Faith was

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(1980): 104.

[675] N. T. Phillipson, 'Scottish Public Opinion and the Union in the Age of the Association," in *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, eds. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 134.

a matter of will; and will commanded acceptance which facilitated any progress and social relations. The selfish inclination of the human being was to be checked with religious morality. Galt declared that if development and any reform was not accomplished at the natural pace of a society, in agreement with the greater providentially established aim, chaos and anarchy would prevail. The stadialist theory of the Enlightenment was blended with a natural universal law, but this itself was a dynamic providential universal system.

These convictions, which can be seen as part of the wider reception of the Enlightenment, can also be called as an enlightened conservativism. In such a context, it is certainly more proper to de-capitalise "enlightenment". One might lay emphasis on the "popular" reception of enlightenment by focusing on Galt's writings. However, this is a matter for further research and discussion and requires a different reading of Galt's writings in a truly "popular" context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

A Chronology of John Galt's Life and Some Highlights of His Period[676]

1775 War of American Independence

1776 Fall of Turgot, the reformer, in France; Adam Smith publishes *The Wealth of Nations*; Edward Gibbon *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (first volume); Jeremy Bentham *Fragments on Government*; David Hume dies

1777 War in America continues; Priestley *Disquisition relating to Matter and Spirit*; John Howard *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales with an account of some foreign Prisons* (beginning of prison reforms)

1778 France and Holland enter war against Britain; British take French settlements in India; Death of Rousseau and Voltaire

1779 Spain joins the War against Britain, siege of Gibraltar; Hume *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (posthumous); **2 May, Born at Irvine, Ayrshire, eldest son of John Galt (1750-1817), shipmaster and merchant**

1780-5 (1780) Lord George Gordon leads anti-Catholic riots in London. 1780-1800 British foreign trade trebles; Society of Antiquaries founded in Scotland; (1782) Bread riots in England; Proscription Act Repealed, thus wearing of tartan and the carrying of weapons in the Highlands allowed again; (1873) The Royal Society of Edinburgh incorporated by charter; Glasgow Chamber of Commerce incorporated; Newspaper *Glasgow Herald* published; (1785) Pitt introduces a Bill to reform Parliament (it is defeated) and first use of steam power in the cotton industry; *The Times* is founded; Kant, Lessing, Goethe, Rousseau, Wesley Robert Burns, Bentham, Boswell, Gibbon and Mary Wollstonecraft publish their works

[676] Sources for the chronology: John Galt, *The Autobiography of John Galt* (2 vols, London: Cochrane and M'Crone, 1833); Ian Gordon, "A Chronology of John Galt," in *The Provost*, John Galt (Oxford: Oxford Uni. Press, 1982); Colin McEvedy, *The Century World History Factfinder* (London: Century Publishing, 1984); Bernard Grun, *The Timetable of History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991).

1787-8 Glasgow weavers riot after their wages are cut, soldiers open fire on the rioters and 6 being killed; Robert Byron born; Charles Edward Stewart, "Bonnie Prince Charles" dies; First steamboat is tested in Scotland; **Galt attends Grammar School, Irvine**

1789 Beginning of French Revolution; Galt's family remove to Greenock, to new house on corner of Blackhall and West Burn Street. **Galt attends classes in the Royal Close**

1790-4 Forth and Clyde Canal between the rivers Forth and Clyde completed; Burke *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; Burns *Tam O'Shanter*; Blake *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*; Riots in Birmingham, British government fearing influence of French Revolution, begins decade of harsh repression; (1791) James Boswell *Life of Johnson*; (1792) France becomes a Republic; Thomas Muir, lawyer and political activist, arrested and charged with sedition in Glasgow; Illuminating gas is used in Britain for the first time; (1793) Britain joins the continental powers in a coalition against France; Pain *The Age of Reason*, Condorcet *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*

1795 Murray's *English Grammar* comes to be used widely in schools; Essayist and historian Thomas Carlyle born; **Galt a clerk in Greenock customs house, and then in mercantile office of James Miller**

1796 Robert Burns dies; Wordsworth *The Borderers*

1797 "Battle of Tranent" in which a demonstration against conscription under the Militia Act is broken up by the Cinque Ports Dragoons and East Lothian Yeomanry; Edinburgh Academy of Physics established; Colerigde *Kubla Khan*; **Galt joint founder of literary and debating society**

1798 Formation of Second Coalition against France; Rebellion in Ireland, United Irishmen want separation Malthus *Essay on Population*; Coleridge and Wordsworth *Lyrical Ballads*

1799-1802 (1799) Pitt introduces income tax for the first time; Bonaparte overthrows the Directory and sets himself as First Consul; (1800) Growth of non-Anglican religions in Britain; Robert Owen, philanthropist, begins social reforms at his New Lanark Mills; (1801) Act of Union formally unites Great Britain and Ireland; First British census; Grand Union Canal is opened in England; (1802) Hugh Millar, essayist and geologist, born; *Edinburgh Review* published; Walter Scott *Minstrel of the Scottish Borders*

1803 War between Britain and France breaks out again; **Life of John Wilson, the Greenock poet, in John Leyden's *Scottish Descriptive Poem.* Extracts from Galt's *Battle of Largs, a Gothic Poem* published in *Scots Magazine*, April 1803**

1804 Bonaparte crowned Napoleon I; The Code Napoleon, civil code, adapted in France; Johann Gottlieb Fichte *Characteristics of the Present Age*; **May, Galt leaves Greenock for London, *The Battle of Largs* published and withdrawn. Galt in partnership with McLachan, factor and broker**

1805 Scott *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*

1806-7 Napoleon enters Berlin; Berlin Decree: Napoleon attempts to blockade British economy in Europe; Death of Pitt; (1807) Milan Decrees; Napoleon escalates economic warfare with Britain; Hegel *Die Phaenomenologie des Geistes*; **1806, Galt "Essay on Commercial Policy," *Philosophical Magazine*; 1807, Galt's interest drawn to law**

1808 Beginning of Luddite troubles in Britain, fear of new machines in factories; Scott *Marmion*; Goethe *Faust*; **Galt's company bankrupt; In business with brother Thomas, who leaves for Honduras**

1809 Andrew Bell, co-founder of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, dies; **18 May, Galt enters Lincoln's Inn**

1809-11 **Mediterranean tour; Meeting with Byron**

1812 George III declared insane; Hannah More *Practical Piety*; Jane Austen *Sense and Sensibility* Galt returns to London; Steamship *Comet* operates on the River Clyde; Byron *Childe Harold*;
Galt abandons the law; *Life of Cardinal Wolsey*; five *Tragedies*; *Voyages and Travels 1809-11*; Editor, *Political Review*; Brief commercial venture at Gibraltar

1813 Robert Owen *An New View of Society*; Austen *Pride and Prejudice***Galt back in London;** ; **20 April, marries Elizabeth Tilloch; Galt *Letters from the Levant*; Manuscript of *Annals of the Parish* rejected by Constable; Last meeting with Byron**

1814 Scott *Waverley*; **Galt's son Thomas born; Galt secretary of the Royal Caledonian Asylum for children of Scottish soldiers**

1815 Battle of Waterloo, final defeat of Napoleon; Corn Law, for controlling imports of cheap foreign corn so as to protect English farmers; Union Bank of Scotland openes; Trial by jury established in Scotland; Austen *Emma*; Scott *Guy Mannering*

1816 Cobbett's influence at its height in Britain, *Register* selling 40-6000 copies a week; Rise in wheat prices increases social distress in Britain; Spa Field and agrarian riots in East Anglia; Scott *The Antiquary* and *Old Mortality*; **Galt *The Majolo: a Tale* (2 vols.); *Life of Benjamin West*, vol. 1 (completed 1820)**

1817 Continuing distress and unrest in Britain; *Blackwood's Magazine* published; Hazlitt *Character of Shakespeare's Plays*; Byron *Manfred*; Keats *Poems;* First edition of the Edinburgh based *Scotsman* newspaper; **Galt's father dies; son Alexander born**

1818 Manchester cotton spinners' strike; First iron passenger ship on the Clyde; *Honours of Scotland* displayed in Edinburgh Castle after being rediscovered by Walter Scott; Galt *The Appeal: a Tragedy* performed at Edinburgh; prologue by J. G Lockhart, epilogue by Scott. **Brief commercial venture at Greenock. Galt returns to London in service of Union Canal Company**

1819 Peterloo Massacre, soldiers fire on political meeting killing 11 and wounding 400; The Six Acts: law and order legislation passed in Britain curbing freedoms; British factory act for children in cotton industry; James Watt, developer of steam power, dies; **Miscellaneous writing, including school books. First acceptance by *Blackwood's Magazine;* "Political Science" and "British Constitution" *Monthly Magazine***

1820 Cato Street Conspiracy, plot to assassinate British cabinet discovered; Malthus *Principles of Political Economy;* Malthus Thierry, historian, *Lettres sur l'Histoire de France*; Scott *Ivanhoe*; **June, Galt *The Ayrshire Legatees* begins in *Blackwood's Magazine* (concluded Feb. 1821). December, *The Earthquake* (3 vols.)**

1821 Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine* published; James Mill *Principles of Political Economy*; Robert Owen *Report to County of Lanark*; Thomas de Quincey *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*; John Constable *The Hay Wain*; **February, Galt *The Steamboat* begins in *Blackwood's Magazine* (concluded Dec.). May, *Annals of the Parish* (translated into French 1824). June, *The Ayrshire Legatees***

1822 Visit of George IV to Edinburgh begins, orchestrated by Sir Walter Scott; Caledonian Canal openes; **January, Galt *Sir Andrew Wylie* (3 vols.; translated into French 1823); May, *The Provost* (translated into French 1824). July, *The Steamboat*; September, "The Gathering of the West" in *Blackwood's Magazine*; December, *The Entail* (3 vols.; Translated into French 1824)**

1823 Huskisson and Goderich begin reforms of British fiscal policy (to 1827); Jeremy Bentham starts the *Westminster Review*, journal of utilitarianism; Sir Robert Peel as Britain's Home Secretary begins penal reforms, death penalty is abolished for over 100 crimes; MacIntosh produces his rubberised waterproof material; **Galt leaves Blackwood for Oliver and Boyd for novel publishing; May, *Ringan Gilhaize* (3 vols.); December, *The Spae Wife* (3 vols.); Galt moves to Eskgrove, Musselburgh, Scotland; and meets D. M. Moir, his first biographer**

1824 The repeal of the Combination Acts in Britain gives an impetus to trade union movement; **Galt *Rothelan* (3 vols.); Canada Company founded, with Galt as secretary; *Annals* and *Provost* published in French as *Les Chroniques écossaises***

1825 Robert Byron dies; Hazlitt *The Spirit of the Age*; Thierry *Histoire de la Conquete de l'Angleterre*; Scott *The Talisman*; **January, Galt sails for Canada with other commissioners of the Company; returns in June; Returns to Blackwood as publisher; *The Omen***

1826 James Cooper *The Last of the Mohicans*; **Galt's mother dies; October, Galt sails for Canada as Superintendent for the Company; *The Last of the Lairds*; Starts writing articles on colonial matters**

1826-33 **Contributions to *Blackwood's Magazine***

1827 Guizot *Histoire de la Revolution d'Angleterre*; Hallam *Constitutional History of England*; **Galt founds the town of Guelph, Ontario**

1828 The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in Britain, allows Nonconformists to hold public office; Exponents of free trade dominate the British Board of Trade;

1829 Catholic Emancipation Act; James Mill *AN Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*; Creation of the Metropolitan Police in London; Balzac *Les Chouans*; **Galt recalled to England; imprisoned for debt July-November; Returns to writing for living**

1830 King George IV dies; Liverpool to Manchester railway is opened, Huskisson is killed, the first train casualty; Stendhal *Le Rouge et le Noir*; *Fraser's Magazine* founded; **Galt *Lawrie Todd; or the Settlers in the Wood* (3 vols.); *Southenan* (3 vols.); *Life of Lord Byron* (translated into French, 1836); "Free Trade Question" and "Thee Letters on West Indian Slavery" *Frazer's Magazine***

1830-6 **Contributions to *Frazer's Magazine***

1831 Growing agitation for parliamentary Scotland's first passenger railway opened, Glasgow-Garnkirk; James Stuart Mill *The Spirit of the Age*; **Galt *Lives of the Players* (2 vols.); *Bogle Corbet; or the Emigrants* (3 vols.)**

1832 Great Reform Bill; Walter Scott dies; **Galt founder and secretary of the British American Land Company; *The Member*; *The Radical***

1833 Slavery abolished in British Empire; Cardinal Newman *Tracts for the Times,* beginning of the Oxford Tractarian Movement; **John and Thomas leave for Canada; *Eben Erskine* (3 vols.); *Poems*; *Autobiography* (2 vols.)**

1834-8 Poor Law Amendment Act in Britain, workhouse system established; De Quincey *Autobiographical Sketches*; **Galt returns to Greenock; Son Alexander leaves for Canada; *Literary Life, and Miscellanies* (3 vols.)**
1835, James Hogg dies; 1838, Queen Victoria crowned at Westminster Abbey

1839 **11 April, Galt dies in Greenock**

APPENDIX 2
Greenock Subscription Library, 1787

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A

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— 3 Syracuſe, Rhodes, Crete, Cyprus, Cyclades, Macedonians, Syria, Armenians, and Epirus.
— 4 Jews, Parthians, Perſians, and Romans.
— 5 Romans.
— 6 Romans and Carthagenians
— 7 Carthaginians, Numidians, Mauritanians, Ethiopians, Arabs, Spaniards, Gauls, Germans, Britains, Huns, and Goths.

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Vol. 8 Vandals, Sueves, Franks, Burgundians, Alemans, Quadians, Lombards, Bulgarians, and Italy.
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Bayle (Peter) Dictionary, Historical and Critical, 5 vols. folio. *Lond.* 1735
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Bertrand (A. F. de Moleville) Annals of the French Revolution, 9 vols. 8vo. *Lond.* 1800–1 02
——— Refutation of Miss Williams' Libel on the Memory of the late King of France, translated by R. C. Dallas, Esq. 8vo. *ib.* 1804
Bertrandon de la Brocquiere, Travels to Palestine, and return from Jerusalem overland to France, in 1432 and 1433, translated by Thomas Johnes, Esq. *Hafod Press* 1807
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INDEX.

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